

AT

VANCOUVER'S WELL

J. LAURENCE RENTOUL



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*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

**FROM FAR LANDS**

POEMS OF NORTH AND SOUTH

*Crown 8vo. 5s.*

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AT VANCOUVER'S WELL



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AT

# VANCOUVER'S WELL

AND OTHER POEMS OF SOUTH  
AND NORTH

BY

J. <sup>John</sup> LAURENCE RENTOUL

176973  
14.12.22

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INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER  
WHOSE LIFE HAS BEEN FOR ME  
THE NOBLEST POEM



## *FOREWORD*

*“At VANCOUVER’S WELL” was completed and ready for publication several months before the outbreak of the Great War. I have resolved to leave it unchanged.*

*J. L. R.*

*Ormond College, The University,  
Melbourne, September 1916.*



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## AUSTRALIA'S MESSAGE TO HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V.

My King, the only King that dared to sail  
Round the great world his Empire's need  
to know,  
Through longest leagues of Ocean, let the gale  
Scowl darkling or the loyal zephyrs blow !

The fleet of Britain was thy nursing-school,  
Her banner thy proud school-flag, and her  
goal  
Each free far haven where her broadening rule  
Pointed toward either Pole.

Thy boyhood, shaped and trained on every  
wave  
And whipt by tide and tempest grew to  
man,  
Calm, self-reliant, steadfast, frankly brave,  
Keen-eyed for them that *can*—

In thrift and daring to uplift the life  
Of thy wide Peoples, and enlarge their gain,  
Mixing thyself with all their toil and strife,  
And touched with all their pain.

For Pain, thy veiled companion, on the road  
Assigned thee toward thine ancient fateful  
throne,  
With shattered plan and hope and love  
bestrowed,  
Made thy high pathway lone.

. . . . .  
We saw thee first a jocund-hearted boy,  
Thy brother by thy side : O, winsome-fair  
Thy loyal gladness in the fame and joy  
To which Life named him Heir !

Then fell the shadow, darkening all the land  
And thy young dream : and the great King,  
thy Sire,  
And the fair Queen found all their love had  
planned  
An empty heart's desire.

Ah ! it will live for ever, that sad day  
When England's Prince, in England's  
minster dim,  
O'er his son's bier let anguish have her way,  
And grasped, impulsive, the gold empty rim

Forged for the young dead brow :—Edward  
the strong,

Deep-hearted, English, hating lust of war,  
But hating coward peace ; thrilled with the song  
Of all the seas and deathless Trafalgar !

And thou, my King, didst shoulder the vast  
weight

Of unexpected Duty, nor didst quail  
At hazard's call, annealed for thy high fate  
By test of wave and gale.

A second time thou camest, Heir to all  
That throne of splendour, and that ancient  
name,  
And Britain's vigil, from her long sea-wall  
Guarding her word from shame.

How the strong South rang with full-orbed  
applause

Round Prince and Princess !—for its heart  
elate

Hailed them true symbols of one sacred cause,  
One sea-girt Empire, one great doom and  
fate.

That Princess stood within thy widening fame,  
Wise, queenly,—winning, for her People's  
good,

Reverence of all men, and, in love's acclaim,  
All hearts of womanhood.

• . . . .  
Great English Alfred sent his farer forth  
To search the secret of the far White Sea,  
To India eastward and the Baltic North  
His words prefigured England's destiny.

To wider coasts and climes thy bark hath  
passed,  
Thy Nations round thee ! By the seven seas  
Thy Freedom-flag on tower and town and mast  
Floats upon every breeze.

And by old Delhi's war - scathed ridge and  
wall—  
How, to her vanquished, Britain can  
atone !—  
Thou gavest back their ancient Capital  
From Love's wise judgment-throne :

Blotting away old angers proud and deep,—  
Our England's pardon can be grandly  
great !—  
Nicholson's spirit seemed to stir in sleep  
*There*, by the Kashmir gate !

• . . . .  
But o'er thee broke the tempest of wild war,  
Mad, treacherous, cruel, blind with lawless  
lust

Of "will to power," and sundered near and far  
Troth's pledges, Honour trampled in the  
dust !

From out her dozing, slack, unguarded trance  
Thy Britain woke ! At the clear Freedom-  
call

Of Serbia, Belgium, Russia, new-born France,  
From her fleet's rampart-wall,

She called her Peoples. O, there rang reply  
From North and South, and thrilled across  
the sea

Round thee, my King : "*Far better dare and die  
Than live no longer free !*"

Yes, 'tis the ancient passion burning yet,  
For England's and for Honour's stainless  
sake,

As keen as when the fierce Plantagenet  
Blazed the fore-way for Drake !

Vancouver, for an earlier George, his King,  
Bore Britain's banner to our unknown shore,  
And stamped upon our coast the blazoning  
Of England evermore ;

## 6 AUSTRALIA'S MESSAGE

Then on young Canada's cliff and mountain-height  
Wrote England's claim, and made her sea-way sure,  
Binding our realms, in Love's perpetual might,  
By memories that endure.

So would I lay down at thy royal feet  
This tribute to his daring, and the fame,  
Deathless, untarnished, of the flag and fleet  
Incorporate with thy name.

Reign thou, my King ! And may thy son's sons reign,—  
When wars are hushed to silence, and the pen  
And science-search and ploughshare once again  
Engage the thoughts of men,—

O'er one broad Britain, girdled near and far  
By unvext Ocean through all years to be !  
O, isle-throned Mother, as before the war,  
“England, bound in with the triumphant sea !”

AUSTRALIA,  
*Anzac Day, 25th April 1916.*

AT VANCOUVER'S WELL



# I

## THE SONG OF THE WELL.

“SPRING up, O well !”—the delvers sang,  
In that old Orient, long ago,<sup>1</sup>  
When in the rock the mattock rang  
And haggard men with eyes aglow  
Saw, as the waters glanced and sprang,  
God in the glad outflow.

So glad and strange the miracle,  
In that sun-smitten land of graves,  
The springing wonder of the well—  
(Scorched waste where now the runnel  
laves!)—  
Seemed wrought by some weird princely spell  
“With sceptre and with staves.”

O, thanks to him who smote the rock!—  
The shepherd that, with wizard wand,

<sup>1</sup> At “‘Beér,’ that is, the ‘Well,’ whereof Jahveh spake unto Moses: ‘Gather the people together, and I will give them water.’” (Num. xxi. 12-18.) The beautiful incident, with its lyric outburst, is from the *Book of the Wars of the Lord*, and forms part of a condensed narrative of the marchings and conquests of Israel, east of the Dead Sea and Jordan Valley, prior to the entrance into Canaan.

10 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

Found Earth's young heart ; whose spirit-shock  
Broke Drought's despair ; and sterile sand  
Leapt into Peoples, like a flock  
Led by his guiding hand !

But chaunting of deep-throated men  
Pealed o'er the desert, far and loud,  
Praising a mightier Cause and Ken,  
Seen, by hushed heart and spirit bowed,  
On soaring peak, in dimpling glen,  
And behind dune and cloud :

Seen in the starry circling lights  
That sped on pathways, far unknown,  
When day was done, and glorious nights  
Lifted in silence, awesome, lone,  
With eyes that watched from depths and  
heights  
Round God's more awful throne :

Seen in the Dawn's young wistful gaze,  
That woo'd the dreaming world to wake,  
Noon's splendour, and eve's crimsoning blaze  
Kindling the non-consuming brake,  
Till man's awed spirit hymned God's praise  
Although no word he spake :

Seen in swift sword-gleam through the cloud,  
Cleaving a pathway for the rain

## THE SONG OF THE WELL 11

Till all the heavens, in pity bowed,  
Wept grace o'er thirsting hill and plain,  
And peak and far glen shouted loud  
For Earth made glad again :

And heard in voice of wooded height,  
And forest's moan and Ocean's chime,  
Urging man onward day and night  
Beyond all sundering cliffs of Time,  
Where none may follow in swift flight,  
Nor mortal foot can climb :

But heard imperious in the call  
Of rivulet or fountain spring,  
Where the scorched crags, abrupt and tall,  
Their sudden arms of shadow fling,  
And the glad waters flash and fall :  
“Spring up, O well !”—they sing.

## II

### THE WELL OF THE WANDERERS.

Ah, ever since the tale began  
How feet fared forth through deserts lone,  
The sweet well-water as it ran  
Went chaunting, in deep undertone,  
“Spring up, O heart of baffled Man,  
Make not so bitter moan !”

The slave-girl, Hagar, when she fled  
From Master’s wrong and wifely hate,  
Fell in the sand-waste as she sped,  
Heart-sick and lone and desolate :  
Sudden a low sweet music said,—  
“Why murmur at thy fate ?”

Parting the thicket, so to see  
Who spoke in pity,—lo, a face  
Looked up upon her yearningly  
From a well’s eye : in ruth and grace  
A fond voice said : “*What aileth thee ?—  
God is in every place !*”

## WELL OF THE WANDERERS 13

It was her own young piteous gaze  
Glassed in the well-depth's mystery :  
Low sang the water's sweet amaze,—  
“God's face ! He knows, He watcheth me :  
Through trudge of weary nights and days  
*The Living One doth see ! ”<sup>1</sup>*

And that first Wanderer to the West  
Who crossed the Jordan's rapid stream,  
Seeking some surer land of rest  
Beyond the mountains' glint and gleam,—  
Yet never found, where'er he pressed,  
The city of his dream,—

Pitched tent and digged in the cool grove  
By Southern palms, and waters cold  
Sprang joyous : and, when herdsmen strove  
For lordship round it, just and bold,  
He sware that bond of neighbour love  
In those rough days of old—

Binding two alien peoples, loth  
To own a common social law,

<sup>1</sup> “Therefore the well was called ‘*Bēr La Hai Roi*,’—‘*Well of the Living One Who Seeth Me.*’” The two Hagar narratives, which I have here fused, will seem to the mere “literary critic” to be “doubles” of the same dramatic life-experience, or drawn from “different ‘sources.’” One, however, who is acquainted with the “Negeb” of Syria or “the Bush” of Australia will know that a “well” occurs again and again as the central feature of life of the wanderers and of the movement of the peoples.

## 14 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

In one firm bond of civic troth  
With sevenfold sanction of dread awe,  
At that first "Well-Spring of the Oath"—  
Palm-fringed Beér-Sheba !<sup>1</sup>

And on its brink the tamarisk tree  
Stood guardant by the sacred well,  
Where Abram's flocks—from strife set free—  
Roamed wide by peaceful range and dell ;  
And, "Friend of God," in amity  
With man he loved to dwell.

So did his sons to West and North  
Through the wide lands go wandering,  
And digged the well ; and tribes pushed  
forth  
By oasis and water-spring :  
(Thus did Man people the wide Earth,  
The ancient Poets sing).

And one lone exile, far from home,  
Awoke amid the desert wild ;  
"God's House, though far afield I roam,  
Roofs in (he said) His wandering child."  
And o'er him glittered Heaven's clear dome,  
Calm, steadfast, undefiled—

<sup>1</sup> "The sanctuary of Beér-sheba properly consisted of the 'Seven Wells'" (Prof. W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 165). <sup>25</sup>

But changed : a ladder, sloping high,  
Seemed to reach upward to God's feet,  
And angels, climbing far and nigh  
(He saw each rapt face flash and fleet),  
Joined lonesome Earth to radiant sky :  
At top God's face was sweet.

Thence, faring forward glad at heart,  
What though the glare of sun and sand  
Smote on his eyes with bitter smart  
And scorched on struggling foot and hand,  
Eastward, each eve, he drew apart  
Nearer his mother's land.

Each night, clear in the beckoning sky,  
Orion and the Pleiades  
Wove their star-ladder ; while anigh  
The hushed and healing desert breeze,  
Kin to his mother's yearning sigh,  
Spoke to his spirit ease.

And, as he slept, the glad young dream  
Came back,—when baffling Time and  
Space  
Are vanished, and the things that seem  
Changed to the witchery and grace  
Of boyhood's tale,—the well-spring's gleam  
And his fond mother's face :

That fairest maid of Eastern land,  
Lissom Rebekah, as she swung

## 16 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

From graceful shoulder to deft hand  
    Her pitcher, thirsting herds among :  
“*Drink, Stranger!*” At the sweet command  
    The weary Earth was young !

. . . . .

He woke : and journeyed : bush and wold  
    Broke the long desert's solitude ;  
The wholesome glint of fold on fold  
    Flickered by marge of field and wood ;  
And, in the slant sun's shimmering gold,  
    God saw that it was good.

And, centred in the shade and gleam,  
    Flocks rested round a stone-capped well ;  
Fairer than angels of his dream  
    Came Rachel. At her beauty's spell  
Strength sprang within him. Stream on  
    stream  
The outpoured waters fell !—

For love can laugh at hampering stone,  
    Its massy weight was rolled aside ;  
The thirsty troughs, all ranged and prone,  
    Brimmed with the flashing crystal tide,—  
By that triumphant hour alone  
    Long toil indemnified !

Oh, at her face so fair and young  
    Swift tides of memory o'er him swept,

The sweet low voice, the kindred tongue,—  
 “Rachel!” His sudden heart outleapt,  
 To her red lips his wild kiss clung :  
 For very joy he wept.

In the clear well-springs of her eyes,  
 But outlined with a gentler grace—  
 Nearer than angels of the skies—  
 The home-sick lonely man could trace  
 Some semblance, lit with love’s surprise,  
 Of his own yearning face.

And round him seemed to rise again  
 The “oaks” and palm trees of the dell  
 Where Isaac digged, when strife and pain  
 Were ended : “*Room-at-Peace-to-Dwell.*”<sup>1</sup>  
 His sire had named it : Heaven’s sweet rain  
 Laughed in the living well.

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew. *Rehoboth* = *spatia ampla* (Gesenius); *amplitudo* (Dillmann); identified with Ruhaibeh (8 m. south of Beér-Sheba, 45 m. south-west of Hebron) by Robinson, Palmer, Rusnagger, Driver, etc.

### III

#### THE WELL OF THE NATION- FOUNDERS.

AND, sprung from that lone wanderer's blood,  
Long ages after by a well  
A stranger sat ; Nile's white-winged flood,  
A palace, princely pomp and spell,  
Abandoned ! Yet, in bitter mood,  
No tears regretful fell :

Yonder, 'mid bleating white-fleeced flocks,  
Came Jethro's daughters, wondrous fair :  
Sudden, wild cries and onset-shocks  
Of Beduin herdsmen rent the air !  
The maidens to the insensate rocks  
Fled in their frail despair.

Then leapt in Moses the fierce ire  
Which made his own chivalric brand  
More dread than hosts. Like forest-fire  
He swept upon the cowering band :  
Then filled the troughs. Strange new desire  
Thrilled through his brief demand,

“*Drink!*”—sweetest pastoral Earth has heard  
 Since maid was maid and man was man,  
 And shepherd’s arm of uplift stirred  
 To dare the highest mortal can ;  
 While through the copses sang the bird  
 Where the well-waters ran !

Ah, gentle heart and arm of might,  
 Love’s tell-tale voice through all disguise  
 And thrilling from the desperate fight,—  
*Drink, little Bird!* And sweet surprise  
 Made two deep well-springs leap to light  
 In young Zippórah’s<sup>1</sup> eyes.

O Nation-Founder!—of whose praise  
 All law-ruled Peoples own the spell,  
 There sounds through all thy wandering ways,  
 By sea-shore, desert-land, and dell,  
*This song*—to endless nights and days—  
 “*The springing of the well!*”

And ever, where they digged the well,  
 Love gathered on the heels of Life :  
 Men drew from far to buy and sell ;  
 Tribes, sundered by an ancient strife,  
 Pitched tent of converse in the dell,  
 With Toil’s new meanings rife !

<sup>1</sup> Zippórah—the Hebrew means “little bird.” She and Moses were afterwards wedded. The Hebrew for “well” means “eye.”

20 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

And by the well the city sprang,  
Clan widened into potent State ;  
Seer counselled, bard in rapture sang,  
For Man's large use and kindlier fate,  
Maids gossip'd, children's voices rang,  
There by the sweet well-gate.

A goodlier song ye cannot sing,  
Nor braver tale of heroes tell,  
O ye young poets, though ye fling  
Search-light by mountain-range and fell,  
Than those dear songs still echoing  
By some old wayside well !

Once, in the stifling rocky hold,  
David, outlawed and desperate,  
Moaned,—as if Life's poor tale were told,  
Man's force too frail 'gainst baffling Fate,—  
“O for a draught from the clear, cold  
Home-well by Bethlehem's gate !”

Then did his leal “three mighty men”  
Break through the fierce foes' iron ring  
And draw the water once again  
From Bethlehem's gate-side crystal spring.  
(The tale lives now as it lived then,  
In songs the heroes sing !)

But hero David would not drink :  
“It is the blood of men,” he said,

“ In jeopardy of life ! We shrink  
To quaff God’s draught ! ” Like wine  
most red  
He poured it forth, and watched it sink :  
Through Earth’s dry lips it sped.

## IV

### WELL OF THE SEA-FARERS AND EMPIRE-BUILDERS.

#### CANTO I.

##### VANCOUVER'S WELL : VANCOUVER AND AUSTRALASIA.

O WIDENED world ! I sit to-day  
By marge of Oceans then unknown ;  
And, west and east and far away,  
The broadening isles and lands are strown :  
King David never poured his lay  
To heavens bright as our own !

“ But can ye find and dig the well  
As in the great quest long ago,  
Or spurn delight, and pleasure's spell  
And ease as gallantly forego,  
Or climb to the high citadel  
God and the heroes know ? ”

Ah, fool ! skies wider smile or frown,  
 And broader sea-tides tug and toss ;  
 Our dawn-gleams higher hills can crown,  
 And prompt through triumph or through  
 loss :

Northward, Orion points adown  
 Toward our resplendent Cross !

O, 'tis not ended ! Hearts can dare,  
 To-day, the gulfs of doom and fate,  
 And loose the sail and outward fare,  
 Fronting all blows of Fortune's hate :  
 Ulysses' self might gape and stare  
 As we sweep on elate !

Nay, 'tis not ended !—Life's great tale,  
 Love's vow of venture, tireless skill,  
 Soul's vision-dream that shall not fail,  
 Forging Time's crude "impossible,"—  
 Wave-ravage, blizzard, reckless gale,—  
 To Man's unbaffled will.

Be witness, in the drear white South,  
 Those five<sup>1</sup> who won to the far Pole  
 And died !—No murmur on the mouth,  
 No flinching of the Briton soul,  
 Through hunger-pang and lone heart-drouth !  
 Nay, they had reached the goal !

<sup>1</sup> Scott, Wilson, Oates, Bowers, Evans.

The snow-cairn folds around the three  
 Still sleeping : Christ's Cross stands above :  
 And Oates lies near. O chivalry,  
 Thy splendid act of comrade love,  
 Thrilling all zones of land and sea,  
 Doth wide Earth's wonder move !

Brave Scott ! The words thy fingers penned  
 When numb and dying—well-nigh dead—  
 Shall vibrate to the great world's end,  
 And crown each Briton's heart and head  
 With nobler birthright ! Hero, Friend,  
 We follow : *thou* hast led !

And still doth Mawson's dauntless band,  
 Hemmed in lone ice-wastes, drear and  
 dark,<sup>1</sup>  
 Outwear grim winter, and withstand  
 Death's frown. Ah, weird electric spark,  
 He hails, o'er leagues of wave and land,  
 "Wait my home-coming bark ! "

Fear not, nor falter ! North or South,  
 This blue blood of the hero men—  
 Through polar chill or tropic drouth—  
 Claims its high heritage again ;

<sup>1</sup> This, with the stanza following and the five preceding stanzas, was published in *The Argus*, Melbourne, while Dr., now Sir Douglas, Mawson was wintering in the Antarctic, and was occasionally communicating with Australia by "wireless."

Whatever speech may fill the mouth,  
 "Scott," "Gordon," "Amundsen" !

Here, by this Sun-kissed bland sea-gate,  
 Where the tide sways so drowsily,  
 Could wit have guessed Time's envious hate,—  
 Fog, sickness, tempest-darkened sea,—  
 Would vex its Finder, as if Fate  
 Mocked man's mortality ?

And, driven by black whirlwind's stress,—  
 Topsails close-reefed, top-gallants bare,—  
 He passed,—where the gaunt *Lioness*<sup>1</sup>  
 Frowned couchant, grim through foul or  
 fair,  
 While billows, ravening merciless,  
 Foamed round her rocky lair,—

Keen-eyed for portents of the shore,  
 Low, half-drowned islands hid in spume ;  
 Sounding each mile that yawned before,  
 Closed round by untracked gathering  
 gloom,  
 With vigil sleepless to explore  
 The sea-way's widening room :

<sup>1</sup> The Leeuwin (The Lioness), so named from the Dutch ship from which was first sighted this bold headland (1622). The designation is not inappropriate. Viewed from sea the Cape at times looks not unlike a lioness couchant, guarding the S.-W. bastion of the great continent. The billows breaking round its base are often lion-like enough in their wild fury. As with many a later seafarer, Vancouver had a rough experience of "what on the charts is called Lyon's Land" (vol. i. pp. 119, 131).

*Vancouver!* in whose veins were blent  
 Twin strains of that old Viking blood,  
 Holland's and England's, which had sent  
 Its farers forth on each full flood  
 Of sea-search, Life as liefly lent  
 To wrath as brotherhood :

Once "Cook's brave middy," trained with  
 ear  
 And eye alert, and toughened then  
 In Rodney's fight : with Gardner near  
 He watched, nor recked (O Englishmen,  
 Have ye forgot ?)—unknowing fear—  
*Where* foes should smite, or *when* !

O breed of Britain's Ocean-Kings,  
 Through that long century's war-romance  
 Two Empires grappled, as in "rings"

Of sea-sway : while, in coward trance,  
 Half Europe gazed ! Urania sings  
 "Ye broke proud Bourbon France,

"And pushed forth Britain's battle-line  
 Till, grappling dire Napoleon's star,  
 Pale Nelson's 'scutcheon could outshine  
 The whole world's blazoned 'fields' of war,  
 Making all-glorious, half-divine,  
 The hell of Trafalgar ! "

O rare sea-rovers, handing down  
 To *us* the shot-torn flag of Blake,

And gathering always new renown  
 Whatever keel-cleft path ye take,  
 Lead, and we follow—doom or crown !—  
*We*, youngest sons of Drake !

Ah, but ye waged a nobler fight,  
 'Gainst slave-hood, ignorance, rapine,  
 wrong ;  
 Into dark caves ye flung Hope's light :  
 To Peoples moaning, "Lord, how long ?"  
 Ye seemed God's angels in mailed might,  
 And in your pity strong !

So—sacred trust our coasts shall keep !—  
 Came shrewd Vancouver, some loved name  
 Of England's great ones graving deep  
 On crag and cape :<sup>1</sup> words edged with  
 flame  
 Whose gleam may rouse us from the sleep  
 Of dotard ease or shame.

• • • • •  
 Staunch human-hearted mariner,  
 Unbaffled, wakeful, unafraid,—  
 Cleaving, through sea-tides dark or fair,  
 Unhindered avenues of trade,—  
 By such keen eye and tireless care  
 Was world-wide England made !

<sup>1</sup> "Cape Chatham"; "Cape Howe"; "King George's Sound"; "Princess Charlotte Harbour"; "Mt. Gardner" ("after my highly esteemed friend, Sir Alan Gardner"); "Point Hood," etc., etc.

O sea!—Night's wonder round thee cast  
 Turns all our picturing words to shame!  
 The starlight flickered on the mast,  
 And round the brave sloop's quivering  
 frame  
 The long surge, kindling as she passed,  
 Broke into living flame.

So dawned that bright September morn  
 When—bitter gale and labour past—  
 Rose from the waves, as if sea-born,  
 “New Holland’s” long-ranged cliffs at  
 last;  
 And Britain’s pennon, as in scorn  
 Of Doubt, danced at the mast.

Whales gambolled in the wide fairway  
 Round the white-winged, foam-cinctured  
 sloop,  
 The porpoise, through the spindrift spray,  
 Raced plunging at the prow and poop;  
 On calm-poised pinions’ circling sway  
 Sea-birds did float and stoop.

. . . . .

Hail, gallant little English ships,  
 Wave-battered sloop *Discovery*,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Discovery*—“a vessel of 340 tons burthen—mounted (Vancouver tells) ten four-pounders and ten swivels; the *Chatham*—armed tender of 135 tons burthen—four three-pounders and six swivels” (*Voyage of Discovery*, vol. i. Introd. pp. 44, 49-50).

“ War-tender *Chatham*.” Ah, those lips  
 Of gleaming cannon<sup>1</sup>—o’er the sea  
 Speak Britain’s voice ! Her banner dips  
 And mocks at Destiny !

’Twixt jutting bluff and sheltering isle  
 The haven opens calm and deep :  
 In the broad Sound blue waters smile  
 Or in the night untroubled sleep,  
 While baffled billows’ wrath and guile  
 Outside the bastions leap.

So, christened with the sweet Spring rain,  
 They anchor, glad at last to rest  
 By the white strand ; and land and main  
 Salute in thunder : on each crest  
 Of cliff and wave gleam lightnings,<sup>2</sup> fain  
 To own the finished quest.

Morn broke : lo, wholesome, sweet and cool,  
 Within the moored ships’ easy reach,  
 A tiny stream, with cup-like pool,  
 Drained trickling o’er the coral beach :  
 Peat-tinged,<sup>3</sup> with healings bountiful  
 Such as no lore can teach.

<sup>1</sup> For the astonishment of Vancouver on finding the smallness of the Spanish “frigate and schooner” (in the Straits of Juan De Fuca), and their indifferent armament, cf. vol. ii. p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> “The weather by this time had become thick and rainy, with much thunder and lightning ; but, as the soundings continued regular, we steered into the port and passed the high rocky bluff-point in thirty fathoms water” (vol. i. p. 138).

<sup>3</sup> Vol. i. pp. 139, 140, 167.

## 30 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

And, in this water of the spring  
That broke from wide Australia's heart,  
They pledged the name the chanteys sing  
By every wave-washed mast and mart.  
Brothers, it has a rousing ring  
To bid you play your part :—

“The King !” It thrilled the eucalypt !  
It woke new echoes, far and near,  
In the dumb gullies : cliffs were gript  
By that bold mandate crisp and clear :  
The lissom wattle, quivering, dipt  
To greet the British cheer :

“King George!”—To the fair spacious Sound  
They fixed that staunch old English name,  
And to the inner Bay was bound  
A royal lady’s gentler fame.<sup>1</sup>  
Brothers, this British-titled ground  
We vow to guard from shame !

So, in the weary heart and brain  
Of the long sick and wasted crews,  
Those bracing waters rouse again  
The pristine sturdy English thews ;  
The keen land-breeze from range and plain  
Their roistering mirth renewes.

<sup>1</sup> The point jutting out at the opening of “Princess Charlotte Bay,” having that inner harbour lying behind it to the West and the outer Sound, “King George’s Sound,” to the east, was the spot where Vancouver stood, under the unfurled British flag, drinking the King’s health, and taking possession of the country in the King’s name. He entitled it “Point Possession” (*Ibid.* 141, 143).

And Jeff, with eyes of merriment,

By the big fire of blazing "gum,"—  
Strange pathos to his deep voice lent,—  
Calls, careless of the days to come  
(His brew the brown peat-water blent  
With brown Jamaica rum),

"*A toast!—Home, and the Sweetheart true,  
My rosy-cheeked, young English Nell!  
She'll wait four years, or three, or two,  
Time-keeping as the Bristol bell;  
We'll meet, just as we used to do,  
By the old Taunton well!"*

Nay, never lustrous Syrian eyes  
Gleamed with such frank, blue steadfast  
light,  
Nor by fair bosom's fall and rise  
Yearned arms so loyal and so white,  
Rebekah's sly coy sophistries  
Were swept clean out of sight !

Ah, Nell ! you watched and waited long,  
With hungry heart, face sweet and brave !  
Then father died ; then came the throng  
Of cares and doubts ; the broken stave  
Choked sobbing in the glad girl-song :  
Jeff came : and found—a grave !

But by the well "a clump of trees"  
Stood guardant, in its midst a "home" ;

## 32 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

Poor wattled hut!—'gainst rain and breeze  
Vain covert, or from salt-sea foam!  
“No bunks, my men, so mean as these,  
Whatever seas we roam!”

He deemed the “mia-mia” basely poor;  
No couch was there, nor easeful bed,  
No barred and guarded portal-door,  
No pillow for a sleeper’s head:  
It stood all bare, and void of store,  
Mute, and untenanted.<sup>1</sup>

Nay, shrewd Vancouver, ye mistook!  
Ye did not *know* these wandering men  
Who flit to forest shade and brook,  
Come heat or cold, to hill and fen;  
Ye cannot find them though ye look,  
Nor tempt them back again!

They vanished at your white sails’ gleam  
Far out at sea; their vague hearts heard  
Your guns’ strange challenge. In their dream  
Fierce spirits threatened. As the bird  
They flitted mute from shore and stream  
To haunts no foe had stirred.

<sup>1</sup> It is touching that Vancouver, after discovering, by the inland streams and valleys, many more “mia-mias,” left behind him at this first “mia-mia,” before sailing from the Sound, tokens of kindly apology: “Whilst we were getting under way, I caused to be deposited at the hut, near the watering place, some beads, knives, looking-glasses, and other trinkets, as a compensation to the solitary owner, should he ever return, for the wood we had cut down” (*Ibid.* vol. i. p. 151).

O nomad of the Ocean-main,  
 This is the nomad of the land :  
 Ye both are wanderers : his the plain,  
 The range, the “bush” : his foot, his hand  
 Are free : in prescient disdain  
 He spurns your law’s demand !

And he can quaff at his wild will,—  
 From founts by wooded dell and range,  
 Or fern-framed tarn where brooklets spill  
 Down precipice remote and strange,—  
 Draughts cool as well-spring by the hill  
 Of some old feudal grange.

What canst thou give him ? Let him be !  
 And thou, pass onward on thy way  
 Opening wide portals of the sea  
 To new white Peoples ! Ah, to-day—  
 Foredooming Death and Destiny—  
 This dark race may not stay !

So mused he o’er the “mia-mias” rude  
 And marvelled by the “fish-wears” frail :  
 No constant home by circling wood,  
 Snug shelter from the wintry gale !  
 No voice woke the deep solitude  
 In answer to his hail !

And fire had scathed cliff-face and peat  
 And scorched the scrub to brown and bare ;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 177, 178.

Smoothing a path for naked feet,  
 And leaving only here and there  
 The bell'd boronia, subtly sweet,  
 To woo the impassioned air.

But, when he clomb among the hills,  
 Which, cleaving, broadened east and west  
 With glade and coppice, glint of rills,  
 Startling the gazer's skeptic quest,—  
 He kenned the glamour-spell that thrills  
 Australia's brooding breast.

O'erhead, unseen, the small birds<sup>1</sup> sang,  
 From their close-woven thicket-dome,  
 Sweet as on boughs that used to hang  
 Song-thrilled from wooded glades “at  
 Home,”  
 When down the dell the streamlet sprang  
 In elfin light and foam.

The black swan watched his shadow fare  
 Forward beneath him on the bay,  
 Or, rising white-winged,<sup>2</sup> wheeled in air  
 And with his wives sped north away ;  
 The curlew, o'er the sea-dunes bare,  
 Wailed to the fading day.

<sup>1</sup> “A variety of small birds, some of which sang very melodiously” (*Ibid.* vol. i. p. 172).

<sup>2</sup> (Vol. i. pp. 148, 172, 173.) “Large black swans, in a very stately manner swimming on the water ; and, when flying, discovering the underpart of their wings and breast to be white.”

O, shrewd twin-despots—Duty, Time!—  
 Deaf to man's self-orbed hopes and fears,  
 Scant weeks, skilled from his task sublime  
     To globe our Earth's two sundered spheres,  
 Had fore-run Flinders by the chime  
     Of ten great splendid years.<sup>1</sup>

But brave Vancouver's gifts were lent  
     Not to one narrowing British land,  
 Not for one Island-continent,  
     But, wider than Pitt's grasp had spanned,  
 Wherever Britain's flag is blent  
     With life, by stream or strand.

He yearned to track our Southern coast,  
     Mile after mile, and test its trend  
 Onward to where the serried host  
     Of far "Van Dieman's" islets rend  
 The surge. But, as a vague dim ghost,  
     He saw the "South Cape" blend

With Eastern seas. And on amain  
     He swept, Time-driven, on Ocean way;

<sup>1</sup> He reached as far east in the Australian Bight as the island named by him "Termination Island." Had his orders permitted him a few weeks more, he would have reached what are now "Spencer Gulf" and the shores of "Adelaide," and would, inevitably, have passed on eastward through the wide strait which divides the Australian Continent from Tasmania, now known as "Bass Strait." This honour was reserved for Grant, who, in the sloop "Lady Nelson," was the first to sail through Bass Strait from west to east, reaching Port Jackson December 16, 1800. Flinders reached Cape Leeuwin from England December 6, 1801, and the western extremity of what is now Victoria April 18, 1802.

## 36 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

Yet called, 'mid blackening hurricane,  
In "None-Knows-What" by Dusky Bay,<sup>1</sup>  
To search the haven, once again,  
Where Cook's old moorings lay.<sup>2</sup>

*O human-hearted Mariner,  
Unbaffled, wakeful, unafraid,—  
Cleaving through sea-ways, rough or fair,  
Unhindered avenues of trade,—  
By such keen eye and tireless care  
Was world-wide England made !*

## CANTO II.

### VANCOUVER AND THE BROADER BRITAIN IN NORTH-WEST AMERICA.

Ah, then, the task was but begun !

From storm-swept South to frozen North,  
Past palm-fringed islets of the Sun,  
The gallant barks went faring forth,

<sup>1</sup> The terrific gale encountered in Dusky Bay, in the South-West angle of the Middle Island of N.Z. well nigh made an end of Vancouver and his gallant enterprise (*Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 187, 189).

<sup>2</sup> "In the year 1773 I had visited Dusky Bay with Captain Cook." "The upper part of the arm which by Capt. Cook was called *Nobody Knows What*, and the only part he did not thoroughly examine." After having explored this with his usual minute care, Vancouver renamed it *Somebody Knows What* (vol. i. pp. 186, 191). With his keen eye for Nature's beauty, Vancouver speaks of the "most singular and majestic promontory" which "fronts this arm."

Coasting where skies hang drear and dun  
O'er a drear desolate Earth :<sup>1</sup>

And linked the bright Hawaian isle,—  
Jocund with summer the year round  
'Mid Ocean-song and Heaven's smile,—  
To Britain broadening without bound,  
And splintered crag and wild defile  
Of pine-ring'd Nootka Sound.

. . . . .

So through De Fuca's fabled strait,  
'Mid freshening squall and drenching rain,  
He passed, and found the wide sea-gate  
Of a new realm, and wed the main  
That clasped the world with the weird fate  
Of England's loss and gain :

His wary eye and science-test  
Scattering the fond old Spanish tale<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the summers of 1792, 1793, and 1794, Vancouver carefully tracked the long coast-line of what is now known as the Pacific Seaboard of the United States of America, as well as of Canada, from "Cape Decision," 29° 54' N. lat. to "Cape Douglas," 58° 52' N. (N.W. of far "Cook's Inlet"), where "Mt. St. Elias," in its vast mass of eternal snow and ice, looms into the heaven on the verge of the Arctic Circle. On several occasions, especially at Cook's Inlet, the gallant "Sea-Farers" were in imminent risk of destruction (see vol. v. bk. v. chap. v.).

<sup>2</sup> Vancouver pours a good deal of humorous sarcasm on the "closet philosophy" as he terms it, feeding on stories of Spanish "navigators," with which the theory had been urged of a sea-way from Juan De Fuca Strait, eastward to the great lakes—a "Mediterranean Sea"—and thence to the Atlantic. By his accurate methods he put an end to the "closet philosophy" in seamanship.

38 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

Of water-way from East to West,  
Where helm might steer and craft might sail  
Through wood-girt inland seas, at rest,  
Unvext by berg and gale.

Thence the great isle that owns to-day  
His gallant name, through noble sound  
And ample strait and broadening bay  
And cliff-walled fiord, he coasted round :  
Spain's towering scheme of Ocean-sway  
Crashed toppling to the ground,—

And France's scheme! Cook, eagle-eyed—  
What time great Wolfe made Canada free—  
Sounding each foot of swirling tide,  
Tracked her great river to the sea,  
And flung her Ocean gate-way wide  
Through all the years to be.

And all her eastward-trending coast,  
That yearned for England, mile on mile  
He plumb'd and scanned,—where ambushed  
host  
Of bergs might shock, or foeman's guile  
Work ravage, and the starry boast  
Of Britain's flag defile.

It was the mood of Chatham's men,  
Unshrinking heart, untiring hand !  
My doleful Wordsworth's "stagnant fen"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "England hath need of thee ; she is a fen  
Of stagnant waters."

Breeds heroes. Let the hour demand  
 The life's blood, Duty's *why* and *when*,  
 They fail not,—sea or land !

O England, England, *there* and “*here*,”—  
 Not once alone at Trafalgar,—  
 “Did England help me”! Shall we fear  
 To pay back doubly?—blood-sweat, scar—  
 No grudge of Memory's dark arrear  
 Sowing new seed of war !

So those new portals of the West,  
 Fronting the broad Pacific main,  
 Vancouver—kin in brain and breast—  
 Unlocked for England. Not in vain  
 The sacrifice ! The toilsome quest  
 Ensured a splendid gain !

Eastward, fair meadow-land and lawn,  
 Framed by the grace of folding trees,  
 Lay open to the brightening dawn,  
 Sheltered from Arctic berg and breeze ;  
 And antlered stag and gentle fawn  
 Spotted in heedless ease.<sup>1</sup>

The swan, white as the stainless snow,  
 Floated on wood-girt bay and mere ;  
 The lissom salmon, row on row,  
 Sped up the runnels swift and clear,  
 Careless of angler's subtle “throw”  
 Or flash of Indian spear.

<sup>1</sup> *Voyage of Discovery*, vol. ii. pp. 63-66.

Abrupt, from waves that crest and comb,  
 Rose ice-throned mountains stern and proud,  
 Or, from some mist-encircled dome  
   Half hid in robes of stooping cloud,  
 Wild spate-flushed torrents leapt in foam  
   Down chasms that called aloud :—

*“Come, O sea-farers, white of face  
 And deft of hand and broad of brow !  
 We waited long your sovereign race  
 To wed the far Past with the Now ;  
 Behind us broadens boundless space,  
 For keel and axe and plough !”*

Ye rampart-walls of bastioned snow,  
 In the proud flush of beauty rare,  
 Against the red Sun's evening glow  
   (Never war-banner waved so fair !)  
 Your long torch-pennons to and fro  
   Streamed on the wondering air.

On each brave peak an English name  
 Crowns the vast soaring regnant height,  
 Blending a tale of hard-won fame  
   With rich flag-folds of ruddy light,  
 Still guarding when Dawn's rosy flame  
   Scatters again the night :

“Rainier,” “St. Helens,” “Baker,” “Hood,”<sup>1</sup>  
   Rising triumphant o'er a land

<sup>1</sup> “Mt. Rainier—named after my friend, Rear-Admiral Rainier” (*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 41, 79, 134-135). (Called also “Tacoma,”

Of strength and beauty—river, wood—

By skies of stainless glory spanned !

How fell ye from the amplitude

Of Britain's outstretched hand ?

Vancouver hailed you English all,

You stood broad-based on Britons' ground ;

To bay and strait and headland tall

His gallant comrades' names are bound :

From far "Cook's Inlet" still they call

*On* south through "Puget Sound."<sup>1</sup>

O Seas, whereon their thews were strained,

Ice-slopes their valour tracked and crossed,

O page of Britain's drama stained

With heart's blood at Love's splendid cost,

The names stand proving what we gained,—

Ah, warning what we lost !

Ye great white mountains blushing red

In the young Morn's indignant glow,—

Imperial Beauty raimented

In stately ermine-folds of snow,—

How could we—sick in heart and head—

Consent to let you go ?

cf. my former vol., *From Far Lands*, p. 181.) "Mt. St. Helens—in honour of His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador, at the Court of Madrid," vol. ii. bk. ii. chap. xi. pp. 395, 399. "Mt. Baker—discovered by the Third Lieutenant, and in compliment to him called Mt. Baker," vol. ii. p. 56. "Mt. Hood"—this "magnificent mountain," Mr. Broughton, on his voyage up the Columbia river, "honoured with Lord Hood's name" (vol. iii. chap. iii. pp. 107, 108).

<sup>1</sup> "Puget Sound," named after Vancouver's First Lieutenant.

## 42 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

Not *yours* the guilt ! If Canada's gate,  
From where west sea and river meet<sup>1</sup>  
North to De Fuca's storied strait,  
Were all disowned, curse not the Fleet  
Nor England, nor unkindly Fate :  
Curse dotard Downing Street !

O vast inexpiable wrong !  
Not for all muttered words of war<sup>2</sup>  
Should they have quailed !—Sons of the strong  
Who dared by coast-line near and far,  
Who risked the gale at Quiberon,  
And died at Trafalgar !

Nay, to be weak in the great hour  
When a free People's frontier-line  
Is menaced by some truculent Power  
That toiled not, bled not, this, in fine,  
Is the fools' dole,—renounce their dower  
Drugged as by opiate wine !—

Spendthrift of that high heritage  
Won by the rovers and the Fleet,  
Through Ocean's roar and tempest's rage  
And blinding wrath of wintry sleet :

<sup>1</sup> The great Columbia river which, by Vancouver's directions, Lieut. Broughton penetrated and ascended for one hundred miles. (*Ibid.* vol. ii. chap. xi., vol. iii. chap. iii.)

<sup>2</sup> Sir Robert Peel had declared in the House of Commons, on April 4th 1845, that "England had a right to the territory of Oregon, a right which was clear and unmistakable. . . . Ministers desired an amicable adjustment . . . but they were resolved and prepared, if their rights were invaded, to maintain them."

O splendid valour ! Dismal wage  
For Duty so complete !

Too slack to guard the Ocean-wall  
For their own sons, yet rash of hand  
And hot of heart to spring at call  
Of crafty Turk, charmed by the wand  
Of the sham Buonaparte !—Poor thrall  
Stamped with his blackening brand !

O pact unnatural !—Mammon's brood,  
France, England, leagued with Moslem  
lust !—  
Making “the East” one habitude  
Of plot and crime and dark distrust,  
War breeding war,<sup>1</sup> Hope's ampler mood  
Down-trampled in the dust !

Ah, and they poured their People's blood—  
Quick human heart's blood—in hot stream  
On fevered waste, by fen and flood :  
It reads like some mad demon-dream !  
Their graves the far waste shores bestud  
Where alien waters gleam.

They died in the wet trenches' chill,  
Sleet-soaked and shivering ; all for naught,

<sup>1</sup> “War is never a solution ; it is always an aggravation,” confessed even Disraeli, who himself had so much to do, later, with prolonging the atrocious despotism of the Turk, and the agonies in “the East.”

## 44 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

By putrid gulch and shot-torn hill,  
The deeds through that wild winter  
wrought ;  
Anguish unsoothed of surgeon's skill,—  
Great God, and how they fought !

Or, when the bullet or the shell  
Sent Time's last call by height or plain,  
They muttered, falling, "It is well!"  
Finding dark death surcease from pain,  
Or wondering if, in England, Hell  
Mastered God's earth again.

What meant we, with our brutal tread,  
At Russia's gate, and flushing seas  
With Life's hot wine? O, 'twas a red  
Mad cup of trembling! To the lees  
We wrung it out! Our aimless dead  
Dot the lone Chersonese.<sup>1</sup>

Ah, can we hear sad Scodra's<sup>2</sup> wind  
Moan o'er the waters, and then pass  
Moaning from grave to grave, and find  
One plea for all that anguished mass  
Of life-waste, wreck of soul and mind,  
Dumb now beneath the grass?

[Seed of that far-flung sin and pain,  
Trod down at Delhi and Lucknow,

<sup>1</sup> The "Tauric Chersonese" (Crimea).

<sup>2</sup> Ancient form of Scutari, though *this* Scutari on the Bosphorus was, of old, usually named Chryssopolis.

Roots still by Ind's bazar and plain ;  
 And maddening heart and plotting brow  
 Brood sullen till Fate bring again  
 Fell Harvest's "when" and "how."]<sup>1</sup>

O, hadst thou spent but half the gear,—  
 Not lives but the shrewd money-fee,—  
 Holding on Ocean, far and near  
 From land to land, by isle and sea  
 For thy young peoples, void of fear,  
 Our pathway of the free,

Then, O great Mother, Life had been  
 All changed to-day ! A wider world,  
 Our sea-kings tracked, the sway had seen  
 Of Peace's reign, though tempests hurled  
 Their rage against it ! O, my Queen,  
 The war-flags had been furled !

Let the dead sleep ! Let us arise,  
 With shrewder hand and chastened heart,  
 With valour blunders have made wise,  
 And foresight plotters' guile to thwart,  
 Love lending vision to the eyes  
 With trust no frets can part !

<sup>1</sup> This stanza should be omitted were I making the poem now, in midst of the terrible war forced upon us by German militarism. The response of India in Britain's hour of need has been a revelation. The poem, however, was completed some months before the War came, and I let it stand in its unity, unaltered.

## 46 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

O "People, mighty in its youth,"  
Whose "growth is swift as morn!"—so  
sang

Young Freedom's poet,<sup>1</sup>—I have ruth  
By any word to cause thee pang  
Of Memory's hurt! Brothers, in sooth,  
From one great heart we sprang!

"Great People!" — England's "chainless  
child,"  
Not on a "murdered Europe" built  
Stands thy fair Freedom, undefiled  
By wars of Empire or the guilt  
Of Nations trampled; though, in wild  
Self-slaughter, thou hast spilt

Thine own sons' life-blood, and for cause  
Less clear than ours, thy banner torn  
In giant strife, thy sacred laws  
Of Union sundered! Late forlorn,  
Thou winn'st to-day a world's applause,  
Through Sorrow's pangs reborn!

Land of great mountain, river, wood,—  
Throned by two oceans,—Fates benign  
Gave thee vast dowry, amplitude  
For a World-Empire,—mart and mine,—  
Forget not! Britain's motherhood  
Her Shakspere speech are thine!—

<sup>1</sup> Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto xi., stanzas 22, 23, 24.

Her sense of Duty, Hampden's deed,  
 Milton's bold tyrant-daunting plea,  
 Her frank, priest-scorning Puritan creed,—  
 Soul, civic judgment, conscience, free :  
 It is an ancient sovran breed  
 Whose heart's blood beats in thee !

O land, so lusted East and West  
 With names of England's deathless dead,  
 O seas, whereon the rovers pressed  
 To wider empire, in their stead  
 Guard the rich fruitage of their quest  
 Proudly inherited !

*“The Heroes found the ‘Golden Fleece’  
 In red War’s grove.” That myth has lied !  
 Fair Wisdom calls, “Let rapine cease !  
 No People stands indemnified  
 That slays a People ! Come, O Peace,  
 Valour’s true queen and bride !”*

Curse on that lean Fleece-thieving ship  
 Whose long keel cleft the Eastern seas,  
 The thin oar-blades whose swing and dip  
 Swept past the blue Symplēgades !  
 War-blight on lands, lone tears that drip,  
 Are salt foam flung from these !

So prays my Poet !<sup>1</sup> Dread and wild  
 Sprang dragon-teeth of ghastly strife

<sup>1</sup> “Would God no Argo e'er had winged the seas  
 To Colchis through the blue Symplēgades !”  
 Euripides, *Medea*, by Gilbert Murray.

48 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

From that reft spoil,—home-troth defiled,  
The poisoned springs of Love and Life,  
The traitor-vow, the slaughtered child,  
The vengeance-maddened wife !

O, the true argosies that sail  
With fruitful spoil athwart the main  
Bear soft white fleece in thrifty bale,  
And iron—but no captive's chain—  
And fruits that gladdened hill and vale  
'Neath Peace's plenteous reign.

And, since her pathways shall endure,  
Owned of all Peoples wise and free,  
Guard thine own portals, and make sure  
Thy rights of Nationality !—  
Great memories keeping sane and pure  
Thy broadening regnancy.

. . . . .

And, O young Canada, guard your gates,  
Your havens wide, your mountain-towers,  
Your wheat-fields broad, whatever fates  
Befall ! And we, where Nature dowers  
Her diverse gifts, through loves and hates  
Will stand on watch by ours !

O fair young Sister,—far away  
O'er that wide-waved Pacific main

Vancouver tracked,—the Prayer we pray!—

*'Through weal or doom, through joy or pain,  
Keep tryst! We, at the gates of Day,  
Vow kinship back again!'*

It is the same old British breed,  
The same blood-beat at love's behest,  
The same heart-uttered simple creed  
We learnt, when bairns, at Britain's breast :  
The same old flag at call of need,  
North, South, and East, and West !

*O England, England, there and "here,"  
Not once alone at Trafalgar,  
"Did England help me!" Shall we fear  
To pay back doubly,—blood-sweat, scar?  
No grudge of Memory's dark arrear  
Sowing new seed of War!*

Leave to thy daughters over-sea  
The wit to fix their frontier-line,  
To guard their gateways of the free,  
Their roads by eucalypt and pine :  
They shall work out their destiny  
As thou did'st work out thine !

Hold thou the Ocean with thy Fleet,  
Whose story makes our faces pale  
With the great heart-leap ! Fearless feet  
And fearless face shall keep the trail

Blazed by the rovers ! Mother sweet,  
Stand strong ! we will not fail !

• . . . .  
But, in the "Dreadnoughts" of to-day,—  
While oaken bulwarks rotting lie,—  
You "wonder if the game we'll play  
With spunk as brave and heart as high  
As *then*, in Britain's battle-fray,  
In those rough days gone by :

"Or, should the lawless aëroplane  
Swoop sudden through the startled air,  
Scorning all sundering cliff and main,  
In that wild hour of life's despair,  
O wave-girt England, all in vain  
Thy great sea-fights that *were* !

"And treacherous 'submarine' shall wage  
More deadly battle, neath the wave  
Once thy safe rampart, billows' rage  
Gulphing proud ship and gunner brave !  
Our England's Ocean-heritage  
Shall be her deep sea-grave !"

*Fool ! 'tis the same old British breed,  
The same blood-beat at love's behest,  
The same heart-uttered prayer and creed  
We learnt, when bairns, at Britain's breast,*

*The same old flag at call of need,  
North, South, and East, and West !*

O brave sea-farers, pioneers,  
In dreams I see you guardant, tall,  
And panoplied 'gainst doubt and fears !  
I hear your cheery challenge call,  
O'er the dim, drudging, shattered years,  
“ *Halt not : nor tire : nor fall !* ”

V

## MY CHILDHOOD'S WELL.

AND still shall exiles, far from home,  
    Storm-swept to alien shores and lands,  
Dig wells by "sounds" where white waves  
    comb  
    And sway and quiet on white sands,  
Or drink where rivulets crisp and foam  
    Down cliffs to gleaming strands.

Ah, on this old Earth never more  
    Shall you find well so beautiful  
As *that* fount near my boyhood's door !  
    Out of the hill's heart, clear and cool,  
It sprang and sang and rippled o'er,  
    Down to its weed-rimmed pool.

Behind it clung the circling wood  
    Of beech and chestnut, ash and pine ;  
Round it the hedging hawthorn stood,  
    And with the wild-rose did entwine ;  
It was a rare old world and good,  
    That boyhood's world of mine !

And trancing-fair and nude and dim,  
In haunted gloamings long ago,  
The Siddh' dance round its mystic rim  
Flitted in windings swift or slow,  
Chant as of faërie seraphim  
Timed to the waters' flow.

Once in the well my mother's face  
Was mirror'd o'er me : my child hands  
Were stretched to grasp her : ah, that grace  
And love and beauty ! By far strands  
And seas and hills it holds its place,  
That well of the old lands !

A trout that gleamed in silvern light  
We fetched from the swift Aghavoe,  
And made it queen, by sovran right,  
Of the well's gentler ebb and flow :  
How it would "rise," then flash from sight  
To mystic depths below !

Ah, trickster Time ! spent by the years,  
A wanderer back from southern lands,  
With wild hope,—spring not yet, ye tears!—  
I reached my native streams and strands :  
(Nay, the true lover's heart, the seer's,  
The poet's understands !)

In my fond dream the old house stood  
Embowered amid the beeches still ;

Round it the green, deep-foliaged wood  
Kept vigil, and the well's clear rill,—  
Sweet voice of Nature's homeliest mood,—  
Sang welcome from the hill.

O Memory's magic in the brain,—  
O'er-leaping dullard chance and change  
And waste of years through shine and rain  
And seas that sunder and estrange,—  
My brave trout flashed to light again,  
Then sped from peril's range !

Fond Fool!—a railway “station” stood  
Bleak, blackening 'neath my boyhood's  
home ;  
The raw “line,” clay-piled, blotched and crude,  
Cleft where my comrades used to roam ;  
Gone was the grace of glen and wood  
And Heaven's once stainless dome !

*‘ Nay, but the well? ’ I stumbled on :  
‘ Great God ! It surely cannot be ?—  
The hedge, the rose, the well are gone !  
The red, drained field, the square tilled lea !  
Ah, glades my young eyes gazed upon,  
To what lands fled are ye ?’*

And never haggard wanderer's prayer,  
When bright mirage had mocked its hope,  
Was numbed to ghastlier despair :  
I felt my void hands vaguely grope

To clutch at nothing ! ‘ Ye fields bare,  
O discrowned, graceless slope ! ’

‘ In the raw furrow stands the plough ;  
From tree-top never as before  
Shall chant the bird ; nor soundeth now  
The bee-hum from the sycamore :  
No fond voice, thrilling heart and brow,  
Calls from my father’s door.

‘ So, pilgrim-staff ! for weal or woe  
We turn again to Southern clime,  
But one last gaze before I go  
Brings back my life as at the prime,—  
Down in yon vale my Aghavoe  
Gleams, and I hear its chime ! ’

• • • • •  
And so my heart-pulse throbs to-day  
To pulses of the salt South tide,  
In this rock-sheltered glorious bay  
Where navies of a world might ride,  
Wild Ocean’s wrath and War’s array  
All baffled and defied.

And *we* shall grasp the lands, the gold,  
And build us homes by stream and shore ;  
Yet deep in yearning hearts we’ll hold  
The bold sea-farers who, of yore,  
Dug the first well, through heat or cold,  
And blazed the track before.

## 56 AT VANCOUVER'S WELL

They come not back ! From no far main  
Their sails gleam up o'er Ocean wide ;  
Yet can I hear their voices plain  
A calling, down the South-sea tide :  
*"O brothers, let us seek and gain  
The 'mia-mias' that abide !"*

So, brooding all alone, I sit  
By shores where South Seas sway and swell,  
While my heart-memories range and flit  
By many a Norland stream and dell :  
And so this reverie is writ  
By brave Vancouver's well.

For who can bid the song be still,  
The glad love-glow make dull and cold,  
That thrilled the soul by fount and hill  
In those great deathless days of old ?  
O tears, ye kept back bravely till  
The old well's tale was told !

## VI

### THE WELL OF THE HEART.

O THOU—once weary by the well  
That lapsed—hast tidings sweet and strange  
Of deep well-water, by no dell  
    Or hill-side found, no grassy grange ;  
Nor changing, though men buy and sell,  
    Unless *ourselves* can change !

Ah, Love, the song, by delvers sung  
    In that old Syrian sun-smit dell,  
Sings still. The ages yet are young !  
    Hearts dig and tire : men buy and sell,  
Yet chant, the whispering palms among,  
    “Spring up, spring up, O well !”



OTHER POEMS  
OF SOUTH AND NORTH



## FATHER PHIL O'DOUGHERTY.<sup>1</sup>

### I

'TWAS Father Phil O'Dougherty  
Broke through the battling crowd,  
With Parson Randolph, frank and free ;  
And both called clear and loud :

"Stand back, for sake of God and man,  
And for the wife and child,  
Nor risk the angry landlord's ban  
To drive you to the wild ! "

For, on that bright morn of July,  
The black sectarian feud  
Came blotting God's love from the sky,  
And man's sweet neighbourhood.

Fierce hearts were leagued in hostile ranks  
Eager for mortal strife ;  
Purblind ! the thousands give God thanks  
For the sheer lease of life !

Some cursed King William down "to hell!"  
Beyond all bounds of hope ;  
Their foes, with frenzied answering yell,  
Consigned to flames "the Pope ! "

<sup>1</sup> An Ulster tale of the "Tenant Right" struggle time.

## 62 FATHER PHIL O'DOUGHERTY

And Father Phil, alert and brave,  
    Stood now amidst his flock,  
And spake—all fluent as the wave  
    And steadfast as the rock—

“O fools ! for nigh two hundred years  
    King William’s under sod,  
And no man’s prayers nor woman’s tears  
    Can change his state with God :

“Boys, if King William be in hell  
    Ye cannot wish him worse ;  
If he have gained God’s citadel,  
    He’s free from ban and curse ! ”

And Randolph laughed : “ Howe’er ye rave  
    ’Gainst Pope or Potentate,  
God’s love alone, beyond the grave,  
    Is master of man’s fate ! ”

So, like the vext sea after storm,  
    The tumult lulled ; and then  
The sullen tides began to form  
    And rise to surge again.

And ravage would have wrought, that day,  
    Its sorrow and its shame,  
But that Love’s bright and winsome ray  
    Into the black wrath came.

For Lady Helen, Beauty's Queen,  
And robed in stainless white,  
Flung her sweet self the ranks between  
And stayed the mood of fight.

"O men," the Lady Helen cried,  
"Christ turns your rage to scorn !  
To save man's life, not slay, He died,  
Of a poor woman born !

" Yet, *you* would leave your weeping wives  
Unhusbanded to-day :  
Back ! home ! and on your angry lives  
The great God's pardon pray ! "

And, at her beauty's spell and plea  
And her white hands dispread,  
The wrath was hushed, as sinks the sea  
When storms are quieted.

• • • • •  
Months later, rumour wildly ran  
All through the glen and town,  
For, from her Castle's pride and ban,  
Bird Helen had stept down,

To mix with Parson Randolph's life  
Her beauty and her fate,

And face her furious kinsmen's strife  
 With love's young heart elate.

“ Nay, not to stoop,” she gaily said,  
 “ Is lore within my ken :  
 I rise to crowning when I wed  
 My King, the man of men ! ”

So, with a beauty made more rare,  
 And eager hands ungloved,  
 She wrought with a right royal air  
 Beside the man she loved.

## II

But when the fever and its dread  
 Crept up the stream and glen,  
 Again, with Pity's hands outspread,  
 She rose to succour men ;

And, 'neath the dripping roofs of thatch  
 And on the dank clay floor,  
 Hearts leapt to hear her lift the latch  
 And steal within the door,

Unbidden as impartial morn  
 Dawning on mortal need,  
 With boon whose bounty turns to scorn  
 All sundering caste and creed.

And, where the cabin, crag-perched, clung  
Or flecked the bogland wide,  
Toiled Randolph, strength all over-strung,  
From morn till eventide.

Or, by lone "clachans" in far hills,  
Through the fog-laden night,  
They saw, o'er flooded mountain rills,  
His lantern's flitting light.

Ah, when "God's man" can write God's love  
On souls from sin released,  
Who doubts his creed is from above,—  
Or "Minister" or "Priest"?

Beside him, most times, glad and proud,  
Clear-throated as the lark,  
She sang the old love-songs aloud  
To cheer him through the dark.

But, heart-sore, she could see him tire,  
The quick young footstep fail,—  
Ah, in his eye the fever-fire!—  
And his face thin and pale.

O, how she nursed the waning strength  
And coaxed the fainting breath,  
And then, defeated, knew at length  
Her unfair rival, Death!

## III

When Parson Randolph fell on sleep,  
Helen sat still, alone,  
Unmoving, locked in silence deep,  
And heart-numb as a stone ;

Doomed, like all mortals woman-born,  
The riddle dark to guess  
And probe at,—soul-blind, baffled, lorn,—  
Our life's unmeaningness.

But Father Phil, at close of day,  
Crept to the dead man's room ;  
And long he knelt like them that pray,  
Dumb in the silent gloom.

Then, in a voice whose anguish deep  
No poet's pen may spell,  
He murmured : “O my brother, sleep !  
Brave brother, it is well !

“ And would that I could sleep as thou,  
The heart-pang all forgot,  
The torture shriven from my brow,  
The soul-fret knowing not ! ”

He kissed him on the eyes and brow,  
And on the finger-tips,

And said : "A blessed sweetness now  
Is sealed upon my lips !"

And then, as if he kissed the rood,  
He kissed him on the mouth,  
And murmured : "This for brotherhood  
And deep heart's yearning drouth !

"For she that is most dear to God  
Hath pressed her red lips there !  
And this shall heal me when life's rod  
Might wound unto despair :

"And this shall nerve me to go on  
All loyal to the goal,  
Where one may gaze her face upon  
Nor stain his hungering soul :

"Where all that hath been known to sight,  
Or loved by mortal men,  
Shall stand within the broader light  
And in the clearer ken !"

IV

Ah, year more fell !—when "pestilence"  
Stalked by the strath and stream,  
And healing skill seemed poor pretence :  
As in some hideous dream

## 68 FATHER PHIL O'DOUGHERTY

The people moved. What could avail  
But words of faith and prayer,  
Hands laid upon the sick and frail,  
Love's voice amid despair ?

And Father Phil went to and fro,  
Undaunted to the last,  
Nor knew a woman's face aglow  
Prayed for him as he passed.

But, when he fell outworned, ill,  
And when the night grew late,  
A woman, pale but beauteous still,  
Came through the sick man's gate :

And watched and tended, night and day,  
Beside the sick man's bed,  
Her name, as his soul passed away,  
The last earth-word he said.

### v

And still, if Lady Helen pass  
Through hamlet or through glen,  
She wins the smile of lad and lass,  
Of crone and wives and men !

No sorrow-pang or wild heart-storm  
Hath left on her its trace,  
She hath earth's beauty in her form,  
God's quiet on her face.

Yet, oft-times, as she broods alone  
By tarn or mountain stream,  
She wakes, self-startled, with a moan  
From some life-tangled dream.

And no man knows why, suddenly,  
The tears unbidden start ;  
For no man kens the mystery  
Hid in a woman's heart.

But, when she prayeth all alone  
In watches of the night,  
Two men stand listening near God's throne,  
Their faces glad and bright.

None, gazing on their crowns, may know,  
Or learn from hymns they chant,  
One was a "papist," here below,  
And one a "protestant":

None guess a woman's love and name,  
And drouth of heart's desire,  
Had scorched them sacro-sanct with flame  
From God's own altar-fire.

## A MODERN ROBIN AND MAKIN.

'TWAS gloaming time : the midges too  
Bit us, it seems, from brow to shoe :  
Next morning we might rub, and rue  
I chose the dusk to speak to you.

But, meeting in the lonesome lane,  
My heart throbbed out its joy and pain :  
I told and kissed, was kissed again,  
Soon o'er our heads gleamed Charles's wain.

Its seven lights danced,—you'd laugh to see !—  
On heaven's outspread rejoicing lea,  
Its wheels and shafts all gone aglee  
Capering in mirth with you and me !

At once all things that had been mute,  
The hawthorn hedge from spray to root,  
The tall pine, rigid resolute,  
Thrilled like the rapture of a flute.

“O, honey Robin !”—faltering spoke  
Your young sweet lips—“hast never broke  
Some damsel's heart, that dreamt and woke,  
And shunned the gaze of neighbour folk ?”

## A MODERN ROBIN AND MAKIN 71

And then the night was kind to me,  
My tell-tale face you could not see :  
“Sweet Makin, we had best agree  
To rouse no dogs of memory !”

The small birds, nestling overhead,  
Twittered, “O hearts, be true, be wed !  
Fill time with toil, unknowing dread,  
Life’s paths of spring before you spread !

“Or, should the snows come drifting down  
And wrap in white the fields of brown,  
With thrifty hearts you’ll face their frown,  
And with Love’s berries Christmas crown !”

Patch’d garb of mine was clean forgot,  
Your ragged sleeve remember’d not !  
O Night, thy magic wand can blot  
Pride’s curse from Love’s sweet drama-plot !

What matter how she was arrayed  
In bare-foot beauty, kirtle frayed,  
When King Cophetua looked, and stayed,  
And kissed his love, the beggar-maid ?

She had no crown upon her hair  
Save its own beauty, rippling rare ;  
She had no royal robe to wear  
Save her own grace and modest air.

72 A MODERN ROBIN AND MAKIN

And *you*, my lass, are highest queen,  
And I the beggar, hungering keen  
For your sweet lips ! With *that*, I ween,  
Like peacock proud, I strut and preen.

All bravely dight, I'll take my stand,  
While mortals pass on either hand,  
The fairest lass of all the land  
My queen, her throne at my command !

So wink and dance, old Charles's wain,  
Up there for joy on heaven's plain !  
Our one sweet way we two have ta'en  
Through Summer sun or Winter rain !

## IF WE HAD NEVER MET.

If we had never met, my love,  
If we had never met,  
The same blue skies would bend above,  
The same moons rise and set :

The same glad birds would sing their song  
By hill and glen and lea,  
The same bright rivers dance along  
All-eager to the sea :

And wistful morns of hope would dawn  
And broaden into day,  
A-gleaming down on field and lawn,  
Above man's work and play :

And gentle eves would dusk the dale  
By road-side or by lane,  
Where Robin tells his stammering tale  
To Makin's heart again.

But, ah, my soul unsatisfied  
Would go a-hungering yet  
If *you* had not come to my side,  
If we had never met !

## THREE WORDS.

“ I LOVE THEE ! ”

SAY it again, as the cushat dove  
To her mate in the listening tree !  
My heart has yearned so long for your love,  
I wonder if it can be :  
O, say it again, my love, my dove,  
To the hungering soul of me !

Restless I wandered away, and away,  
For I thought you could not care ;  
O, coy and proud, you would not say  
What had healed my life's despair :  
But, wherever I wandered, by night or day,  
You were *there*, and *there*, and *there* !

Say it,—till never, O never, a trace  
Of the doubt remain with me,—  
With the warmth of your own sweet breath  
on my face,  
Here under the hearkening tree,  
And the panting “ Yes,” in my arms’ embrace,  
Of your soul’s young ecstasy !

I am back by your lawn, my love, my dove,  
    You are here by the trysting tree :  
You have said, O say it again, my love,  
    Proud lips and eyes of glee,  
Twice over and thrice,—“ My Man, I love—  
    I have loved—but only *thee* ! ”  
And the words were sweet all words above,  
    Though the words were only three.

## “ ‘TWILL SOON BE O’ER !”

(BY THE BANKS OF THE APARÍMA, SOUTHLAND, N.Z.)

AN ANGLER’S VISION.

### I

“ Now what see you there, to send your wits  
A-footing and fooling it into song,  
As though ’twere a waltz, or the champing bits  
Of the trampling steeds where the troopers  
throng ?

“ Myself sees naught save the gray dull sky  
Enfolding a river dull and gray,  
It’s green banks, sodden and dank, heaped high  
’Neath cliffs of shingle and marl and clay—

“ And the meadows soaked with the ceaseless  
rain,  
Swept over by squalls that snarl and smite ;  
Our ‘ lines ’ have lashed each ‘ run ’ in vain,  
Not a trout has ‘ risen,’ ‘twill soon be  
night ! ”

He was fretted now ; for the one "good day"  
That had dawned as yet on our angling tour  
Had veered, in the tricksy Southland way,  
To a shrill sou'east and a heaven dour.

So he trudged up stream : by the red marl-bluff,  
Where the swirling waters eddying lay,  
I could see the gleam of his "cane-built" tough,  
And hear the risp of his reel at play.

But down by the willows, by low lush banks,  
I had "grassed" that morn, "my record score,"—  
Small heads, deep girths, full faultless flanks,  
And one was a "three," and one a "four."

How the black clouds clear from an angler's brow  
At the faint first trace of the ill-luck turned—  
Skies soft, streams rippling and tuneful now,  
As when Spring's new hope through the Winter yearned !

II

Then an eager whinny, keen and low,  
Pierced the river's plunge and the strident air ;

Some tone, as wrung from a human woe,  
Throbbed into its anguish like a prayer.

It drew me straight up the cliff, o'er the beck,  
Through the tangling scrub, to the upland  
mead :

By the rails, lo,—wire-held, flank and neck,—  
Stood trembling a wild-eyed mother-steed !

And beyond, barred off by the jagged fence,  
Her colt stretched toward her, neck and  
eye :

O wild will, love-urged, fierce and tense,  
Meshed round with the Finite's clutch and  
tie !

A colt and his dam, nor more nor less !  
What poet could string a lay on these—  
Though the sweet woods framed their mute  
caress,  
And the lark's joy thrilled through the  
wondering trees ?

Yet, ah, thou graceless thrift of man,  
Thy hideous jag-fence marring the wild  
Sweet art of Nature, thy greed's ban  
Sundering the mother from her child !—

For the bristling "three-rails" held apart,  
Though they reached and pressed, the  
yearning twain :

Ah, "weaning trick," heart torn from heart  
By the farmer lore, for the market gain!—

At least the poet's soul cries "shame!"  
On the cursed craft and the close-fist span  
That flout the social laws which frame  
One weird love-doom for the brute and  
Man.

His own deft trick hath lured the trout  
That shot bow-like on the dancing "fly";  
Yet will he wreak his anger out  
On modes which mock the mother's cry!

In her passion mute that mother-love  
Had striven and urged till the lissom trail  
Of the stabbing wire its mesh had wove  
Round hock and neck with the strength of  
mail.

With bleeding hands I untwined the coil  
Of the tangled, stubborn, fierce "barb-wire,"  
But the great wise brute ignored my toil,  
And plunged 'mid its pain in her wild  
desire.

Now, eye unto eye, brow close to brow,  
They yearn each to each o'er the fence's  
check;

80    "TWILL SOON BE O'ER!"

With her gentle tongue she is soothing now  
His quivering ears and his arching neck.

And it slowly dawned on my dull male brain  
That the force which held the brave heart  
there

Was stronger than cable or close-linked chain,  
And subtle as soul, and finer than air.

'Twas not for herself yon whinnying cry  
That had pierced through the hills and the  
river's moan :

That cry of the wild : ere Eden's sigh  
It had thrilled through the forests, shudder-  
ing lone !

III

Then there loomed up near me the farmer's  
face,  
Pawky and ruddy and cannily wise,  
With its shrewd dry smile, all scant of grace  
For the poet's "fash" and the seer's  
surmise.

"He's the rare young rip," was his chuckling  
croon  
O'er the colt's misdoing and dole of sin,  
"We hae done oor best to rail him roun',  
But the sly auld Deil couldna' yaird him in.

"That mither o' his, o' sense bereft,  
At his faintest niched wad dash, pell-mell,  
O'er scaur an' cliff, 'cross the gorge's cleft,  
Through the sough o' the sea, or the  
flames o' hell!"

Then the hard face changed, lips twitched  
and worked,  
His words came labouring deep and slow ;  
Some mystic tone in their brusqueness lurked  
Like the crisp back-swirl in the river's  
flow :—

"Man, a mither's love is a plumbless spring :  
I hae mind when my ain face said 'Gude-  
bye !'  
An' my mither wailed!"—Here some shin-  
ing thing  
His rough hand flicked from his tighten-  
ing eye.—

"Love's pang o' the partin' disna' stay :  
Man, at the time, but its wrench is sore !  
Oh, ay ! they'll forget ; 'tis the new warld's  
way,  
Ye needna' fash ; it will sun'e be o'er !"

IV

It rang through my sense with its dull refrain,  
As I thridded the scrub to the plunge and  
roar

82 "TWILL SOON BE O'ER!"

Of the river's rush :—“O, 'tis all in vain,  
The joy and the parting, 'twill soon be  
o'er !”

Sure, the great mare, broken in wind and  
knee,  
Shall go to the knacker, and then to the  
clay ;  
And her colt, in the high stakes' gallop-glee,  
Shall be cheered by the crowd when the  
world is gay !

He too shall pass, borne down by the weight  
Of his own brave pluck of the years before,  
Bone-broke on the hurdles : ah, mesh of the  
fate !  
'Tis the farmer's saw : “it will soon be  
o'er !”

I strove to banish the dancing feet  
Of the lyric croon : 'mid the strong outpour  
Of the river's joy I “cast,” but the beat  
Came cadenced back, “it will soon be  
o'er !”—

Though the lark sang rapt in his mirth in the  
cloud,  
And the trout glanced by in his arrowy  
sheen,  
And the dancing waters, they laughed aloud  
As they glided behind the willowy screen.

Then I shouldered basket and trudged to the inn,

And whistled to hearten the path before ;  
But the curséd croon kept droning its din,  
"O, the love and the parting, 'twill soon  
be o'er !"

And the Takatímos<sup>1</sup> bastioned snow  
Flashed in the gleam of the dying day,  
The cold blue peaks and the after-glow  
More drear for the glory gone away.

O'er the hills that girdled the gray west sea  
Fitfully faded the paling light :  
O light of the eyes that were bright for me,  
Thou too art gone ; it will soon be night !

v

'Twixt the sleep and the waking the Vision  
came,  
And the light and the face I had seen  
them before,  
And the voice I had known, and it murmured  
my name,  
Clear and soft, as when young when my  
heart was sore.

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced "Ták-ă-tee-moes" : a sierra-like mountain range, in Southland, running at right angles to the "Princess" range ; when snow-clad a beautiful sight in the morning or evening glow.

84 "TWILL SOON BE O'ER!"

Its words were as lips of the Long-ago  
That touched on my mouth and my heart  
and eyes :  
"O child!" — came the accents sweet and  
low,  
Simple and strong like a seer's surprise.

And it spake no more. O, hushed I lay,  
Too glad for words was the heart of me :  
And I slept. In the dawning of the day  
Came a voice, came a face that was fair to  
see.

'Twas *another* face from the lyric Past,  
From the days when Love and Joy were  
young,  
Its pure song round Youth's sail and mast  
Had been sweeter than chants the sirens  
sung.

We had then no time to think of doom,  
Life's portals oped on wondrous lands,  
The Ocean stretched with boundless room  
From mystic caves and shell-starred strands.

From the wide high hills, with great hearts  
then,  
How we gazed on the vales and the homes  
within !—

And we laughed at the little fields of men  
And the frets and the greeds that fenced  
them in :

At the brows cross-puckered with care and  
fears,  
And the salt tears dimming the glance of  
the eye  
Though love were writ on all the spheres,  
And the lark sang hope in the blue of the  
sky !

O, the face bent over, the voice spake low :  
"Lover and friend, we did not part ;  
It is not over, it does not go,  
The clasp of the hands and the tryst of the  
heart !

"O, 'twas not in the Past the Soul was young,  
And streams laughed glad in the mystic  
song,  
And rapt seers spake with tranced tongue,  
And Love's might triumphed over Wrong.

"O, no : by rare words Plato spoke,  
By the Christ's voice flung 'gainst the  
darkling sky  
From His stark lone Cross when His strong  
heart broke,  
Love is too great to forget or die !

86    "TWILL SOON BE O'ER!"

"Come up, from the trend of the narrowing  
wall  
Of the small-fenced meadows and marts of  
men,  
To the heights where the Visions and Voices  
call :  
Love does but wait,—somewhere, some-  
when ! "

## THE COMET'S SONG.<sup>1</sup>

(Halley's Comet of 1910.)

I SPEED and speed so fast away,  
And into space so far,  
They think me now a splendid ray  
And now a little star.

But, be it praise or be it blame,  
My heart the secret hath  
To keep, through honour or through shame  
Still onward in my path.

I gleamed above King David's town  
The night that Christ was born,  
And heard the Peace-song thrilling down  
To wake a gladder morn.

I tracked the sky with angry flame  
O'er blood-stained Senlac hill  
When hero Harold fell. O shame !  
It makes me tingle still.

<sup>1</sup> Written as prelude to a Young Folks' Book—*The Book the Comet Dropped*—projected for 1911. The “Great Strike” thwarted the publisher's plans. The “song” proves that the writer, at least tried to fulfil his part of the compact.

But I came back again to find  
 His England great and free,  
 Her victor-flag on every wind,  
 Her sails on every sea.

And, O, her new-born freedom-speech  
 That broke from Shakspere's<sup>1</sup> mouth  
 Thrilled outward far as Earth can reach,  
 To west and north and south !

And then great Newton's subtle friend  
 Began to gauge my course,  
 My curves and windings, destined end,  
 And calculate my force.

And, with that mystic eye of Mind,  
 He measured out my track,  
 And tried my secret cause to find,  
 And date my comings back.

And, as I on my way did spin,  
 And sped in space afar,  
 I glowed with joy, he seemed so kin  
 To me, a brilliant star !

And still I keep my destined path,  
 On errands not my own,

<sup>1</sup> "When beggars die, there are no comets seen ;  
*The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."*

*Julius Cæsar*, Act II. Scene i.  
 From Harold's day to Shakspere's, Halley's Comet had appeared seven times.

To link—my heart this secret hath—  
The Unknown to the Known.

I sweep by lonely Uranus  
Past bounds of night and day ;  
But all his weight cannot concuss  
My sweet will from its way.

I swing round Neptune's mighty mass  
Out, out in lonest space,  
Salute, then beckoning onward pass  
Unresting in my race.

A wiser Force than sun or star  
Is guiding me along ;  
And, bright or dark, or near or far,  
I hear its secret song.

It is the great All-Father's voice,  
That rules all worlds above ;  
And, one day, you shall all rejoice  
To find its path is Love.

Young Folks ! I must away, away !  
I leave this song to you :  
Fare forward, dauntless ! Fill your day  
With doings brave and true !

Young Nation !—newly-kindled star,  
Climb upward on your track !

Be brighter, purer, wiser far  
When I sweep gleaming back !

So may your peaceful land and flag,  
And homes, and workshops' hum,  
And wheat, that waves by range and crag,  
Salute me when I come !—

1911.

## JACK HUNTER.

(HALF-MAORI BOATMAN AND ANGLER'S GUIDE,  
GREAT WAIAU RIVER-MOUTH, SOUTHLAND,  
NEW ZEALAND.)

*Obit—1910.*

### I

HE wasn't white, nor black, nor brown ;  
But a sunny tan in the glow of the skin—  
As true as the "mill" on your worn "half-  
crown"—  
Made oath for his pedigree and kin.

For the two fierce strains of the two sea-  
breeds,  
Wind-swept from the sundered isles afar,  
Had blent,—unbid by the kirks and creeds,—  
'Mid the grapple of race and the anger of  
war.

And the Maori mother gleamed in the glance  
Of the wistful depths of the darkling eye,  
In the vigil-gaze that searched askance  
At the trend of the stream and the curve  
of the sky :

In the ridge of the nose and the crag-like chin,  
In the large-lined mouth, and the fighter's ear,  
The trapper muscles on shank and shin,  
And the silent scorn at the taunt and sneer:

In the love for the river and lake and wood,  
And the softened tone at the voice of the sea,  
In the hornelike feel for the solitude  
And the hush of the forest's mystery :

In the passion for lazy spells of rest  
At the end of the long tough tug of toil—  
To wander at will, as the heart knows best,  
With no Time's punctual worry and moil.

But the British father showed in the pluck  
Grim through the gale at the grip of the oar,  
Dour 'mid the baffling tricksy luck  
Of the flood's wild swirl and the snag-set  
shore :

In the straight uplift of the fronting brow  
And the inbred sense of self-command,  
So ruler of others : for the "now"  
And the need, deft wit and the plastic hand:

And an instinct born to the larger life  
Of the men he toiled for,—wider world  
And wider seas, with their darlings rife,  
And the great sails filled, and reefed, and  
furled !

Height?—Six feet five in his big gum-boots,  
With a mighty span of chest and girth—  
A giant tree, that had been at the roots  
Eight pounds and an ounce the day of his  
birth!

Does it matter a jot, the white or the brown,  
The colour of skin or the tinge of the eye,  
When it comes to the fate of a man to drown,  
Or the call to the heart to be brave and die?

You fling to the winds your rules of “caste”  
When the breakers roar and the tempests  
blow,  
With the one wild heaven above the mast,  
While the one wild water swirls below.

Then the man with the cunning of hand and  
eye  
And the master will—let the surges roll!—  
Is lord of the world till the storms go by,  
And King of us all by the law of the soul.

We trusted you, Jack, when the nights were  
dark,  
When your staunch boat crooned in the  
spindrift’s wail,  
And your true eye never missed the mark,  
And we never found your pluck to fail!

## II

Your life, I will own, had certain flaws,  
 It lacked the “hang” of the “modern  
 things”;  
 You had not studied the “Darwin-laws”  
 Nor learnt that Rafael’s boys had wings!

The “*Ding an sich*”<sup>1</sup> and the “Infinite”  
 Had not perplexed your simple sense;  
 You did not know a small flea’s bite  
 Con-caused “the plagues” and “the  
 pestilence.”

You did not ken that the “anthropoid”  
 Begat the Man by the “Welt’s” advance,  
 And the worlds had birth from the vacant  
 “void”  
 By the naughty “Atoms” crossed on  
 “Chance”!

You just believed that Man is Man,  
 A son of the gods, and brute is brute;  
 And so, by the genial Nature-plan,  
 We may “fish,” and “trap,” and—on  
 “week-days”—shoot!

<sup>1</sup> Reality in itself.

You conned no creed and you kenned no Church,

Your Chancel was the ambient air :  
In the clutch of the gale, in the boat's quick lurch,

Your soul had its own mute-muttered prayer.

Your psalm of praise was the tui's song,—

O, pure-toned, God-swung matin-bell !—  
Your organ-anthem, tender and strong,  
Old Ocean's mystic swing and swell.

But I could wish that the men "in town,"—

Who advertise their modern wares,  
And beat by tricks their neighbours down,  
And mix their "shoddy" with their prayers,

Who use the toiler's heart and limb

To heap up wealth, till strength shall fail,  
Then doom him, working-eyes grown dim,  
To the old-age pension or the gaol,—

Whose sons go squandering time and purse

In luring girlhood down to shame,  
Sealing on Mammon Christ's dark curse,  
Earning by gear a blackening name,—

Could learn Jack's accurate "Yes" and "No,"  
His orthodoxy stamped in deed,

His hate of the “maudlin,” the “mean and low,”

And mix Jack’s ethics with their creed :—

Could learn that the Christ’s ideal man,  
 The “neighbour” of the godliest type,  
 Was he whose creed five words<sup>1</sup> may span,  
 And whose heart had a harvest rich and ripe—

And the fruit was *deeds*—of a helpful hand—  
 And the “neighbour” helped was his race’s foe,

A broken man of a rival land :  
 The tale is old, but its learning slow !

When the “bounder” boasted of his “catch,”  
 Of the “great trout lost,” a subtle smile  
 In Jack’s dark eye would lift the latch  
 On Jack’s white soul—his scorn of guile !

### III

O Jack !—O Waiau, mighty and strange,  
 Begot from the loins of the Mountain-height !—

Staunch through the ceaseless skurry and change,  
 Ye two were as one, through the day and the night !

<sup>1</sup> Love God : love your neighbour.

And the river-god and the river-man  
Had a cult of their own no bard may sing ;  
The god-voice spake as the waters ran,  
And the oar made its daily offering—

Of a service done to his brother men,  
Though the pay was scant and the thanks  
were small :  
And, to-night, in many an angler's den  
Jack's name stirs heart-beats in us all.

We have "crossed" with Jack when the  
thick sea-spume,  
Blown far on the breath of the wild west-  
gale,  
Might cow the bravest. As in a room  
At home we sat : "Jack could not fail ! "

. . . . .  
The thistles are choking the garden-plot  
Where his lettuce and onions and "'taters'"  
grew ;  
But my eyes were wet and my heart was hot  
When I passed by the brogue-worn path  
we knew.

And my curse be on them that could let him  
die,  
Nor watched—as a brother would watch  
—by the bed

Of a stricken knight, when the "ghosts"  
draw nigh  
Round the poor crazed eyes and the  
fevered head !

The Waiau sweeps by the cabbage-tree  
Where Jack's flag flew, as it was before ;  
The white waves leap where the sou'-west  
sea  
Hurls them in thunder on the shore.

And nothing is changed to the novice eye :  
*He never crossed in "Hunter's boat!"*  
But for *us* the wind has a weirder sigh  
That brings a clutch at the knot of the  
throat.

There's a hand you miss at the swing of the  
oar,  
And a voice you want through the scud of  
the rain :  
There's something wrong with the river and  
shore :  
A true man lost comes never again !

## IV

Have *you* saved a life ? In many a room,  
To-night when the home-lights sparkle  
clear,

They know : " Jack saved me from the doom,  
When 'bushed' and the river was full of  
fear."

We can trust his fate to the Fisher of men,  
To the Love that walked on the wrath of  
the sea :  
Else the fisher-folk had perished then  
In the storm and the dark on Galilee.

## AUSTRALIA.<sup>1</sup>

January 1, 1901—May 9, 1901.

SHE rose amid the Nations, tall and fair,  
The wide South seas kissed at her garment  
hem,  
Lights of new heavens gleamed in her lustrous  
hair,  
Freedom her diadem !

And on her bosom, Time's glad prophecy,  
Six stars that into one rich radiance ran,  
Her Urim and her Thummim of the free  
Young Commonwealth of Man :

And in her raiment, curiously inwrought,  
Opal and sapphire, gems of price untold,  
Pearl from far wave, and—through deep  
mine-shaft sought—  
The shimmering glow of gold :

And magic colours blent of range and dell,  
And pasture where the sportive lambs may  
bleat,  
And subtlest tints—no poet's tongue can tell—  
From sun-kissed fields of wheat.

<sup>1</sup> In my former volume, *From Far Lands: Poems of North and South* (Macmillan & Co., London, 1914), the last three stanzas, which originally formed part of this poem, were omitted. It is here given in full.

Too confident of beauty to be proud,  
    Too satisfied and young to doubt or pray,  
Her open glance and buoyant will unbowed  
    Fronted the broadening day.

Her face uplifted and her brave bold eyes  
    Gazed on into the future unafraid,—  
No mystic depths of reverence, awe, surprise,  
    No Past to make dismayed !

No martyr-moan from pyre or battle-plain<sup>1</sup>  
    Had seamed that beauty, frank and debonair,  
No sobs from Gethsemanes of pain,  
    No midnights of despair—

Changed into morns of triumph, when the  
    day  
    Saw men like gods, but featured homelier  
        far,  
As, in the pass, by mazed Thermopylae  
    Or glorious Trafalgar.

And, all-accustomed to her wide-wayed sea  
    And ampler spaces and unhindered room,  
She faltered not to meet her destiny  
    Nor reck'd of gathering Doom.

<sup>1</sup> This can, in fairness, be said no longer in view of the destruction of the *Emden* and the valour and sacrifice of "the Australians" on the peninsula of Gallipoli, and through the awful conflict and triumph at Thiepval and Pozières.

But at her girdle hung an opening scroll,  
On whose white virgin folds might yet be  
writ  
Tales of high deeds transcending utmost goal  
Of Man's prophetic wit.

And at her feet the Ocean yearned away  
To East and North, and Southward without bound,  
And Westward where the sequent Night and Day  
Circled the great world round.

Then did Urania, gently drawing nigh,  
Win her, with kindling glance, some space apart,  
And kiss her brow and lips, each tremulous eye,  
And hands and beating heart,  
And spake : "O child, the roads are rough and long  
The Nations have to journey to their goal ;  
Thou needest all thy dower of Toil and Song,  
Of knowing and of Soul :  
" And Faith that schooleth Patience, and the knee  
Bent Godward, learning Love's diviner art,  
And—wisest wizard of the strong and free—  
The pain-illumined Heart ! "

## GILBERT MURRAY'S EURIPIDES.

### A POET RE-VOICED BY A POET.

(On Professor Gilbert Murray's Cycle of Translation-poems—*The Plays of Euripides*—as completed by the publication of *The Alcestis*.)

“MILTON admired Euripides.”<sup>1</sup> And, lo !  
The cock-sure Whig, scratching his own  
large ears,  
Dubbed the Greek poet “Bottom.” ’Mid  
his peers,  
Prating, he munched self-circled, measuring so,  
As clever wits in Athens long ago,  
The seer who sang, “*Dark death, in spite  
of fears,*  
*May be man’s life, and life the theme for  
tears.*”  
Ah, large-souled Browning,<sup>2</sup>—thy keen eyes  
aglow  
With great blind Milton’s vision, and the art

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay’s Essay on Milton. (In common with all who value supreme style and vivid portraiture in English historical literature, I owe a great debt of gratitude to Macaulay ; but his purblindness as to the Greek dramatists, above all Euripides, has misled many.)

<sup>2</sup> Balaustion’s *Adventure*, Aristophanes’ *Apology*, and, supremely, *The Ring and the Book*.

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From some old tale Truth's ring of gold to  
    fuse

For Athens or for England,—torn apart  
From life and love, Alkēstis still renewes,

Through this rare poet's mastery of the  
    heart,

The voice that reft the chains at Syracuse !

1915.

# AT THE SIGN OF THE SWORD

BY

J. LAURENCE RENTOUL

CHAPLAIN GENERAL, C.D.F. AND A.I.F.

(Published in Melbourne "In aid of the Wounded Australians.")

INSCRIBED  
(IN GRATEFUL ADMIRATION)  
TO  
THE GALLANT OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS  
OF THE  
AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES;  
WHO, ON THE PENINSULA OF GALLIPOLI,  
HAVE "JEOPARDED THEIR LIVES UNTO THE DEATH  
UPON THE HIGH PLACES OF THE FIELD";  
AND  
WHOSE VALOUR AND SKILL HAVE WON  
FOR THEMSELVES,  
AND FOR THESE LANDS OF THE SOUTH,  
UNDYING RENOWN.

“Traynings of Men, and Arming them in severall places and under severall Commanders, . . . are things of Defence, and no Danger.”

“Neither is Money the Sinewes of Warre (as it is trivially said) where the Sinewes of Men’s Armes, in Base and Effeminate People, are failing. For Solon said well to Croesus, . . . ‘Sir, if any Other come that hath better Iron than you, he will be Master of all this Gold.’”

FRANCIS BACON (LORD VERULAM).



## PRAYER FOR AUSTRALIA.<sup>1</sup>

ASKEST thou a prayer from me,  
Greatest isle in widest sea?—  
O, through all the changing years,  
Thou dost win our pride and tears!—

*God, in love and loyalty,  
Keep the Motherland and thee!*

Realm of vine and hoof and flock,  
Pearl in wave and gold in rock,  
Land of tilth and cane and corn  
Sun-kissed at the gates of Morn,  
*God's peace crown thee with content,  
Earth's one Island-continent!*

O, where'er the child may roam,  
She remembers still the home  
Where the mother, soon or late,  
Watched to meet her at the gate!

*God, my young home of the free,  
Keep the Motherland and thee!*

*Trafalgar Day,*  
*21st October 1914.*

<sup>1</sup> An Australian child, when they were praying to-day for "England," asked: "Have they not a prayer, too, for Australia?" To that touching appeal these verses were my answer.

## DEATH SONG OF THE 9TH LANCERS.

(On Sir John French's retreat from Mons to  
Le Cateau.)

O SOLDIER lads and tars,—  
It makes you hold your breath,—  
The Lancers and Hussars  
Rode singing on to death !  
*Britain, my Mother, beyond the sea,*  
*They sang for home, and they died for thee !*

Like schoolboys loosed for play,  
(You read and hold your breath !)  
The fighters, all the way,  
Sang as they rode to death.  
*Mother, the tears are upon thy face*  
*For the gallant dead and the pride of race !*

Balked by the meshed barb-wire,  
'Cross all the snarling guns  
And through the red hell-fire  
They rode, my Britain's sons !  
*Mother, proud Mother, beyond the sea,*  
*They smote for us all, and they died for thee !*

## DEATH SONG OF 9TH LANCERS 111

And few came back, that day,  
Shell-scathed and scant of breath ;  
But still the song shall say  
How England faces death !  
*Mother, strong Mother, beyond the sea,  
Call to thy sons, and they die for thee !*

MELEBOURNE,

*September 1914.*

The marvellous charge of the 9th Lancers, the 18th Hussars, and the 4th Dragoons (Royal Irish) occurred during Sir John French's perilous strategic retreat from Mons to Le Cateau (August 24-26, 1914). (See his despatches, No. 1.)

Of the 9th Lancers' entire regiment, at the close of their deed of daring, "only 220 mustered." Captain D. K. Lucas-Tooth, an Australian, son of Sir Robert Lucas-Tooth, formerly of N.S.W., got his death-wound in this gallant struggle.

## LANDING OF THE AUSTRALIANS AT GABA TEPE, GALLIPOLI.

April 24-25, 1915.

IN the deep of the darkling night,  
By the storied Trojan seas,  
The boats stole out to the fight  
On the crag-crowned Chersonese.

For the half-moon waned and sank  
As the “tow-ships” shoreward drove ;  
And the young troops, rank on rank,  
Gazed dumb at the cliff and the wave.

’Twas their first grim grapple with death,  
With rifle, and cold grey steel,  
And holding hard at their breath  
And the “nerves” they must not feel :

Where even a saint might swear,  
And oaths from the heart that leap  
Might be counted by God a prayer  
In the book the angels keep :

Round them the shelterless shore,  
And in front the trench-rimmed height,

Sniper, and field-guns' roar,  
As the day broke clear from the night !

But, up the crumbling steep,  
And clinging to scrub and thorn,  
They proved by their grip and leap  
The land where their might was born.

O, look !—yon figure !—on high,  
On the crest of the broken ledge !  
You know him !—the arm and the cry,—  
As he sways on the toppling edge !—

“ He has leapt to the parapet ! ”—  
O, they did his bidding well,  
Though their eyes with tears were wet  
In the rush up the steep as he fell !—

“ Come on, Australia !—on ! ”  
’Twas a call heard never before,  
Nor ever such fight was won,  
By the winding Dardan shore !

And, as long as tales shall glow  
With the tragic deeds of fame,  
The splintered cliffs shall know  
My young Australia’s name.

O mother, and wife, and child,  
I wis your hearts are sore ;  
But your country, undefiled  
And free from shore to shore,

Is proud of you and your dead,  
 Is proud of your loss and your tears :  
 The bays on each fallen head  
 Shall be green for a thousand years !

So the beach and the cliff were won  
 In their first great costly fight,  
 In the blaze of the full-day sun  
 And the deeps of the darkling night.

And the bayonets were unfixt,  
 And they felt what the victors feel,  
 Though the dripping tears were mixt  
 With the red on the reeking steel.

Till Time shall be no more  
 They shall sing, by the peaceful seas,  
 How the fight was fought by the shore  
 Of the shot-torn Chersonese !

Sound the Last-Post for the dead,  
 Drop a tear 'mid the falling tears :  
 The bays on each hero's head  
 Shall be green for a thousand years !

**NOTE.**—When making the above poem, I was not aware that the troops whose valour I was appraising were those of our own State of Victoria, many of them students of our University and its Affiliated Colleges, and that the leader whose clear call,—“Now then, Australia! Come on! Australia, on!”—nerved and steadied his brigade for their wonderful rush up the steep, was a distinguished ex-Ormondite, Colonel, afterwards Brigadier-General, J. W. M'Cay, who, a little later, led his Victorians (the 2nd Brigade) in their great and terrible assault on Cape Helles, where he was again severely wounded. He

## AUSTRALIANS AT GABA TEPE 115

is now Major-General M'Cay, D.S.O., C.B. Colonel, now Brigadier-General, MacNichol, D.S.O., was severely wounded in the same assault. In his later cable message (June 12 and 14) Captain Bean makes that fact known : "It is now possible to state that the brigade which made the magnificent charge, described in my cable of May 9, was the 2nd Australian Brigade." But we now know that all the Australian and New Zealand troops have displayed the same marvellous skill and indomitable heroism, and have won for themselves, and for all these new lands of the South, imperishable renown. Later (August 18) Captain Bean cabled : "The 3rd Brigade (Q., S.A., W.A., and Tas.) had made the famous assault on landing at Gaba Tepe ; the 2nd Brigade (Vic.) made the wonderful charge at Cape Helles ; and the 1st Brigade (N.S.W.), therefore, was chosen for the assault on 'Lonesome Pine.' . . . No finer feat has been accomplished here."

## OUR BATTLE-CALL.<sup>1</sup>

### I

My young land, my true land,  
Australia, wide and free !  
Her rampart one bright girdling strand,  
Her pathway all the sea !  
And who shall grudge or who withstand  
Her broadening destiny ?

(*Refrain.*)

O Motherland ! My fathers' land !  
O Daughter-lands afar,  
God keep us one in heart and hand,  
In trade, and peace, and war !

### II

The old flag, the one flag  
That's known through all the world !—  
And let them threat or let them lag,  
But, while it floats unfurled,  
We fear no windy boast or brag  
'Gainst our one Britain hurled !

<sup>1</sup> For the sailing of the Australian Imperial Force in defence of the "scrap of paper" and the freedom of the little nationalities.

## III

They fared east, they fared west,  
The rover-sons of Drake ;  
On each far Ocean's billowy crest  
Their foeman's fleet they brake :  
The same blood stirs within our breast,  
To-day for England's sake !

## IV

For Cook spoke, and morn broke  
O'er Ocean's southward way ;  
No cannon-reek or battle-smoke  
Obscured her dawning day  
When Freedom's child, Australia, woke,—  
Our island-queen to-day !

## V

We hang here the banner brave  
On every outward wall ;  
We keep the gates, by coast and wave,  
Whatever fates befall :  
Woe to the traitor-loon or knave  
Who halts if Britain call !

## VI

No, none shall halt ! None reckoneth  
When Britain calls her sons ;

## 118 AT THE SIGN OF THE SWORD

You hear,—it makes you hold your breath,  
Your blood to fire runs,—  
“The Lancers sing, and ride to death”  
Down on the German guns !

### VII

With Nelson’s signal for the right  
And Hampden’s “No” for wrong,  
God’s hand above us in the night,  
Man’s brotherhood our song,  
God’s valour gird us for the fight,  
His patience make us strong !

O Motherland ! My fathers’ land,  
O Daughter-lands afar,  
God keep us one in heart and hand,  
In love, and peace, and war !

*September 1914.*

## NEUVE CHAPELLE.

(“Eye-witness,” at the Headquarters of Sir John French’s British Army in Belgium and Northern France, tells how the Westphalian Prussians “became masters of Neuve Chapelle” in the early winter, November 1914. He gives a vivid description both of the ruined little village itself, with its surrounding country, and of the terrible conflict in which its captors “were driven out,” by the splendid valour of the British troops, and the concentration of British and French artillery, on “March 10th,” 1915.

“The appearance of the village suggests the havoc wrought by an earthquake. . . . In the churchyard the very dead have been uprooted, only to be buried again under the masonry which has fallen from the church. Crosses from the heads of tombs are scattered in all directions. The sole thing in the cemetery that escaped damage is a wooden crucifix, which is still erect, amid a medley of overturned graves.”)

### I

O, pleasant were the fields in the mellow  
summer ray,  
And glad the village street with the children  
at their play,  
And jocund through the land, unwitting of  
its doom,  
The promise of the orchard, the throb of  
forge and loom !

’Twas good to watch the kine stand knee-deep in the stream,  
With shadows doubling restfulness in waters’  
gloom and gleam ;

And good to hear the risp of the scythe  
 through bending corn,  
 And the speech of a free folk in the land  
 where they were born.

And farm joined hands with farm in the  
 champaign near and far,  
 With brown-thatched thrifty homes of a folk  
 unvext by war :  
 And the poppy-dotted gardens with many a  
 colour glowed  
 Behind the trim-cut hedges that fringed each  
 trending road.

## II

But all the ways from everywhere ran criss-  
 cross into one,  
 The hamlet where the old white Church stood  
 in the kindly sun ;  
 For morning-dawn seemed glad to glint upon  
 its little tower,  
 The shifting sunlight flecked its roof from  
 changeful hour to hour,

And fell on grassy mounded graves that told  
 man's love and loss  
 By simple slab, and sculptured tomb, and tall  
 white carven cross.  
 There did a People's ashes sleep, when life's  
 peace-toil was done,

Within God's acre, in the land their fathers' valour won.

## III

Ah, cursèd war-lords!—In a day the fields so glad and fair  
Lay shuddering while the cannon spoke through the tormented air;  
And from Liége came Antoine back its dreadful tale to tell,  
Limping, sore-wounded, to his home in little Neuve Chapelle :—

The dreadful tale of compact torn, of deeds of lust and shame  
Which, long as kingdoms last, shall ban and blacken Deutschland's name!—  
Antoine, the widow's only son, whose bright young word and glance  
Had won all hearts: his kin of old had fought and died for France.

When Antoine died, a girl whose face had been as bright as morn  
Grew pale and drooped, and sang no more among the fields of corn.  
And, being poor, they carved no stone above young Antoine's head,  
But raised a wooden crucifix, amid the sleeping dead.

Ah, Christ!—'Twas liker to Thine own, the  
 stark lone ransom-tree  
 That rose above a ruined world in Love's  
 last agony.

## IV

And then the cruel winter came. And,  
 through the fog and sleet,  
 Loomed up the "screen" of cavalry, the  
 myriad trampling feet

Of harnessed hosts, and gleaming steel, fierce  
 ranks that stretched afar !  
 O poets, sing no more the joy and pageantry  
 of war !  
 Sing ye the deeds at which the sun should  
 hide his face in shame,  
 At which the pale scared moon should shrink,  
 through all her shuddering frame !

It seemed as if no living God watched now  
 the tortured earth,  
 While foul and loutish lust and crime  
 battened on home and hearth,—  
 The ravaged hamlet, ruined maid ! So  
 "Culture" made a hell  
 Where thrift and peace and love had reigned  
 in little Neuve Chapelle.

## v

O blessed Springtime ! Once again God's  
voice was in the land,  
Speaking in tones, the only tones, brute  
Might can understand !—  
The Voice with which Eternal Love doth  
thunder on the sea  
And break the battle, as with hands, when  
God doth mightily :

The Voice as when the Armada quailed, and  
fled dispersed afar  
When all the winds and billows fought for  
God in Freedom's war.  
It was the British cannon now, and France's  
vengeance-guns  
That centred doom, as from one hand, on  
those leagued hordes of "Huns" !

And Neuve Chapelle, so wrecked and torn  
by wild war's ruthless hate,  
Rocked in the trembling of the World as if  
with heart elate :  
And, by the Church, the sleeping dead rose  
from their resting-place,  
In scorn and wonder at their foes, and looked  
them in the face,

Then sank back restful, satisfied, by their  
white Church's wall  
That fell above them, mantling them in one  
white funeral pall !

## VI

Ah, when the dreadful fight was fought, and  
the great victory won,  
A stranger thing was never seen beneath the  
gazing sun.  
For, 'mid the shattered carven tombs, frag-  
ments of crosses white,  
That German guns had wrecked and torn, a  
horror in God's sight,

There stood one object,—wonderful, unhurt,  
pathetic, lone,—  
As if appealing 'mid the waste of tumbled  
grave and stone ;  
It was the wooden crucifix that rose at  
Antoine's head,  
The anguished Christ upon the rood amid  
the sleeping dead !

Above the ravage of man's hate, *that* lone,  
poor wooden Cross  
Stands lifting up its protest dumb, through  
all Time's gain and loss.

## VII

O, when a day and night went by, what did  
the fighters hear,  
Down in the trenches wet and grim?—songs  
thrilling sweet and clear  
Above the blighted garden-plots where  
cottages had been,  
Above the scathed and shell-torn fields that  
had been late so green!

When the fell poison-fumes were cleansed  
from God's indignant air,  
Above the ruin wrought by man that Time  
shall not repair,  
Above the yellowing withered mounds, the  
simmering fetid scum  
Of crater-pits, that once were homes, where  
children no more come,—

Above the crumbled little Church, a huddled  
heap of white,  
O'er shattered tomb and splintered cross, “a  
horror in God's sight,”  
O, from the ragged bits of hedge and shell-  
rent poplar trees,  
There chanted forth the spring-birds' songs,  
as in a land of ease,

## 126 AT THE SIGN OF THE SWORD

A jocund, ransomed, peaceful land, where  
children once more play  
Down by the rivers, in the meads, in earth's  
young holiday !  
The blackbird's carol filled the air, the  
thrush's twice-told note  
Thrilled from his hope-enraptured heart and  
love-impassioned throat.

Then, in the trenches,—O, my God !—strong  
men broke down and wept,  
The battle-rage, the red blood-lust, from  
heart and memory swept !  
They were again in English fields, by Scottish  
heath and stream,  
By sweet Welsh valleys, Irish lakes where  
wistful waters gleam :

Where, through the woods at morn and eve,  
blackbird and thrush may sing,  
And down the river, and in streets, the shouts  
of children ring,  
And o'er the meadows soars the lark lost in  
the listening blue :  
And the wild winter-time is past, and all  
things are made new.

O Cross, lift up thy mute appeal above man's  
hate and hell !  
O birds, sing clear your Spring-time song, as  
*then* at Neuve Chapelle !

## SERBIA.

(SONNET.)

FULL seldom did an ancient People die  
To be reborn, and front the newer day,  
After long doomful years had rolled away,  
Lifting its young face, and bright hope on  
high !—  
Like that glad bird<sup>1</sup> whose song, through  
morning sky,  
(Because in desert tombs it could not stay)  
Thrilled from the tree-top, and the glory-  
ray  
Flamed on its breast, and Nile, and far and  
nigh.  
Serbia ! thou liftest thy young radiant face  
From the long ruins wrought by Tyranny :

<sup>1</sup> The “Bennu” of ancient Egyptian mythology. (Clemens Rom. *Epis. ad Cor.* 25; Sayce, *The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, pp. 120-122.) Professor Sayce’s beautiful exposition of the “Bennu” myth exemplifies the wholesome and helpful spirit of “historic criticism,” as contrasted with the amusingly fabulous account of Clemens Romanus.

128 AT THE SIGN OF THE SWORD

Thou shalt again assert thy rightful place  
In grove and harbour by old Adria's sea,  
And hail with flame-song, 'mid thy ransomed  
race,  
Enfranchised Europe, new-born Italy !

*Centenary of Waterloo,*  
*June 18, 1915.*

## BATTLE-OATH OF THE. CLANSMEN.<sup>1</sup>

(Farewell vow of the wounded Highlanders on leaving hospital for return to the battle front.)

“*Britain must realise that not only her soldiers, but the whole Nation is at war.*”—*The Times*, London (On the sinking of the *Lusitania*).

### I

O mistake not, men and brothers, a whole  
Nation is at War !  
Sound the tocsin ! Shrill the pibroch ! Bid  
it echo near and far !  
Let the fierce doom-notes of battle peal on  
mountain-path and lea,  
Stir the dotard sleeping cities, and vibrate  
athwart the sea !  
Time is past for sporting crowds and golf, for  
dance and idlers' play,  
'Tis a Nation mustering calls her men to deeds  
and battle-fray !

<sup>1</sup> News of the sinking of the *Lusitania* by a German submarine, May 7, 1915, and the drowning of their Canadian kinsmen's wives and children had just reached them.

## 130 AT THE SIGN OF THE SWORD

### II

Ye that love not sword or battle now from  
battle shall not cease  
Till the battle-hurlers perish trampled 'neath  
the feet of Peace !  
O, ye hearts, so slow to answer though the  
foe insults your shore,  
Listen to the clansmen's anger and the oath  
the heroes swore.—

### III

"We are healed again, my brothers, we can  
once more face the foe ;  
But a farewell pledge to Motherland before  
we rise and go !  
Gallant comrades, gather round us, and the  
oath of soldiers swear,  
With the heart of holy anger and the arm  
made strong to dare ;  
Like the oath sworn by the clansmen at the  
dark well of Cawnpore  
Fringed around with clots of women's hair  
and British babies' gore !—

### IV

"By the great white throne of Judgment,  
by the rifle and the sword,  
By the bayonet's clean cold glitter in the  
glance of God the Lord,

Never will we tire of struggle nor our hands  
grow slack from fight,  
Till we crush Wrong's hell-girt empire and  
avenge the cause of Right !

“ ‘ By the cold Atlantic billow that has suck’d  
down wife and child,  
By the cry of maid and mother and of  
innocence defiled,  
By the sob of harried Belgium and pale  
Serbia’s moan of pain,  
By the poison-fumes in trenches, and the  
wounded stabbed and slain,  
*Never will we tire of battle, nor our hands grow*  
*slack from fight,*  
*Till we crush Wrong’s demon empire and*  
*enthrone the reign of Right !’*

“ ‘ Tis a farewell word to Scotland and to  
Freedom ere we go,  
On the journey back to battle, and to grapple  
with the foe !  
*So we swear it on the cleanness of the cold grey*  
*naked sword,*  
*And we swear it ’mid the lightning of the*  
*vengeance of the Lord ! ’ ”*

## ANZAC—NOT IN VAIN!<sup>1</sup>

(The “Expert Military Correspondent” of a leading German newspaper ascribes the failure of the Turks and of the German fortifications at Erzerum, under the Russian assault, to the summer operations at Anzac and the Dardanelles, which “sapped all the Turkish energies.” The Turks, he confesses, have not recovered from the strain of the Gallipoli conflict.—*London Cablegram of February 21st.*)

MEN of Anzac ! Not in vain  
All the battle-sweat and pain  
Of the brave young lives that fell  
Gashed and torn by shot and shell !  
Now the riddle’s written plain,  
Foes confess ’twas not in vain.

This it was that clogged your feet  
As ye limped along the street—  
“ *All the sacrifice is vain,*  
*Ghastly cost, and where’s the gain ?*  
*Shattered youthhood, splintered thigh,*  
*Lopped-off arm, and blinded eye !*

“ *Ah, the horror of that day,*  
*Lonesome Pine, or Suvla Bay,*

<sup>1</sup> Published in *The Argus*, Melbourne, February 26, 1916.

*Mad with thirst and badly led,  
Moan of dying, mounds of dead,  
And those graves down by the sea  
Of that hell—Gallipoli ! ”*

But read out those words again—  
“ Anzac ! —No, ’twas not in vain ! ”  
’Twas the pivot of the war  
As it swung round near and far :  
O, my pals, ye turned the tide  
Of the battle wild and wide !

With the British bulldog grip,  
Snarl of teeth and scorn of lip,  
How ye held your foeman tight,  
Shook him, worried day and night ;  
Never Turk and Hun again  
Could endure such tug and strain ! —

Spoiled his planned-out carnival  
By old Nile and wrecked Canal ;  
And the dream the Teutons had  
Of dear, dirty old Bagdad,  
Persian Gulf and Tigris stream,  
Lo, behold, it was a dream !

When the Russian cleft a path  
For the vengeance of God’s wrath,  
In the bayonets’ rush of doom  
Down on bastioned Erzerum—  
O, ’twas Anzac spelled out plain,  
Splendid loss and deathless gain !

Pale Armenia—freed at last,  
Outrage, tears, and torture past,  
Woman's wail and maiden's cry,  
Pleading to a ruthless sky!—  
Anzac lads, 'twas not in vain  
All your valour and your slain!

When they reach the "Golden Horn"  
In young Freedom's broadening morn,  
When the victor flags are furled  
Through a new-born wondering world,  
They will cheer across the sea  
"Anzac and Gallipoli!"

Dullard, learn it! Hold it true!—  
'Tis the thing the heroes do—  
How the venture of the Cross,  
That transfigures pain and loss,  
Proves—and proves it once again—  
Love's great cost is not in vain!

*February 22, 1916.*

## AUSTRALIA'S BATTLE-HYMN.

God, that made our fathers strong,  
Lead us when the dangers throng :  
God, that made our mothers pure,  
Make us steadfast to endure !  
On the wave or tented field  
Be our sword and battle-shield !

Hail, our Empire spreading far,  
Great in peace as dread in war !  
Banner brave, as in the past  
Float on fort and tower and mast :  
Let thy blazon flutter free,  
South and north, on every sea !

Here thy sons shall guard the gates  
Of thy southward shores and straits ;  
On wide ocean we shall meet,  
One unsundered flag and fleet,  
And the pathway of the sea  
Prove our broadening destiny.

O, for peace or battle-fray  
Nelson's signal points the way ;

## 136 AT THE SIGN OF THE SWORD

Duty's claim and country's call  
Shall be conscience for us all !  
Set that signal high, and then  
Forward ! Quit yourselves like men !

### REFRAIN

*God, that watchest through the day,  
Guard each seaward coast and bay !  
God, in love's unsleeping might,  
Keep our homes through darkest night !*

MELBOURNE,

September 1914.

NOTE.—Dedicated, by special permission, to Her Excellency Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, this Battle-Hymn was published separately, with music by the Rev. J. M'Intosh, M.A., in aid of the Australian Branch of the Red Cross Society, and of the "Soldiers' Institute" at the Military Camp, Broadmeadows, Victoria, seven successive editions of 1000 copies each being disposed of, securing a large sum for those causes. It is included in the list of hymns attached to the "*Form of Service Authorised to be Used at Church Parades of the Australian Military Forces.*" "At a memorable 'rally' in Cairo, before the Australian Forces left Egypt for their first fateful landing on Gallipoli, 'Australia's Battle-Hymn' was impressively sung. Months later, on the last morning (Sunday) of our stay in Egypt (21st and other Battalions) we had a united Church Parade, at which the three Chaplains (Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist) took part. Sir John Maxwell, the A.O.C., was present. After service he addressed the troops, and said he had been looking through our Australian *Order of Service* and had found what he thought was an ideal motto for us. Thereupon he read out the last stanza of Dr. Rentoul's Battle-Hymn. I am sure it will often touch deep chords, but never deeper than it did that morning. The story of our torpedoing in the *Southland* so soon afterwards must now be common property. It was a thrilling experience. But, though we had sad losses, our last thought of it is full both of thankfulness and pride. All behaved so gallantly!"—Chaplain the Rev. D. Macrae Stewart, Gallipoli, 21st Battalion, A.I.F., November 5, 1915.

## “KITCHENER’S MEN.”<sup>1</sup>

Dedicated to Lt.-General Sir W. R. BIRDWOOD, K.C.S.I.,  
K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C. Anzacs.

HAVE you heard the story of “Kitchener’s men,”

How he made an army from nothing at all ?  
Nerved, each as if with the strength of ten,

For the one great cause they came at his call,  
And smote, with the veteran’s might and  
ken,—

That great new host, of Kitchener’s men !

Silent and grim he held to his way,

Held the critics’ gibes in scorn,  
Faced the task of each clamant day,

By the level track or the thicket of thorn :  
“ ‘Tis a slow siege-war,” he said, “ but *then*  
You shall win, at the last, with Kitchener’s  
men ! ”

When the battle broke, that first of July,  
On the foeman’s front, from the Somme’s  
bright flood—

<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26th July 1916.

Through the shrapnel scream and the slogan  
cry—

They sealed his vow in their red heart's  
blood,

On, north, o'er the Ancre brook and fen,  
Those serried ranks of Kitchener's men!

Loud and high was the song of the shell,  
As it splintered and crashed through the  
Mametz wood ;

When a young life reeled in the rush and fell,  
Another stepped in where his "pal" had  
stood :

O'er trench and crater and "dug-out" den  
The waves swept on—of Kitchener's men.

Gordons, and Suffolks, and Royal Scots,  
Kent, and sturdy Northumberland,  
Their blood-stained blue forget-me-nots  
Have kissed at our heart and thrilled on  
our hand :

From thorpe and city and Highland glen  
They rallied as one, the Kitchener men :

Sons of the north, and sons of the south,  
Stafford, and Erin's fusilier,  
Londons, and Yorks, but all one mouth,  
One throat, one heart, with the Britons'  
cheer :

If you ask of England’s “where” and “when,”  
Go, read the story of Kitchener’s men !

Ulster lads, with the song of the Boyne,  
And the “No Surrender!” of Derry’s gate,  
With the sinewy arm and the girded loin  
And the faith that mocks at Hell and Fate,  
O streams of the Strule and the Erne and the  
Bann,  
The stream was red where their young  
blood ran !

And the signal-star shot into the air,  
“Come to our help!” but they never came;  
So they fought to the last, and died, at Serre,  
Those Lancashire lads ! Oh, they played  
the game !  
What else could they do, just there and then,  
Than fight and die ? — They were Kit-  
chener’s men !

Where was Kitchener ? Who can tell  
Of the vigil-post whence he gazed, from far,  
As his young troops marched, and dared, and  
fell,  
In the hottest front of the world-wide war ?  
His spirit, I think, was proud just then  
'Mid the splendour of God and the glad  
“Amen !”

Where does he rest 'neath the restless tide?—  
By the black-ribbed rocks or the white-  
ridged sand?  
His Ocean-tomb is great and wide,  
As his field of battle was wide on land.  
His task was done! And he died just then  
When the bugle called for Kitchener's  
men!

*15th July 1916.*

## HISTORICAL



## CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER AND HIS VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

THE elder William Pitt, the great Earl of Chatham, may truly be called the re-creator of the British Navy. He had died in 1778, more than a dozen years before Vancouver's fateful voyage began. But the spirit of his last words still lived in the hearts of the British people : "His Majesty (George III.) succeeded to an Empire as great in extent as its reputation was unsullied. Seventeen years ago this People was the terror of the world." And the living voice of his son, William Pitt, the younger, still moved the British Empire and the British fleet when Vancouver went forth upon his perilous enterprise. The "Instructions" under which he was to sail were signed by the second Earl of Chatham, and by Hopkins, Hood, and Townshend.<sup>1</sup> The famous captains and sea-warriors the elder Chatham had called into action did not doubt of England's destiny, despite the seeming disaster of the loss of her American Colonies. It was the era of great British sailors, restoring the memory of the daring and skill of Drake and Grenville and Blake, Hawke and Rodney, Howe and Hood, and Alan Gardner, Jervis and Dundonald ; and in their wake came Nelson and Collingwood and Troubridge, all of them worthy of the lineage of the "mighty men of

<sup>1</sup> The Additional Instructions bear the signatures of Chatham, Townshend, and Gardner.

valour," who set the world wondering at Cadiz and at Santa Cruz.

But amongst them arose sailors of a special mood, more kin to Raleigh's aim and vision—not so much strategists and tacticians of ocean battle as pioneers of the broadening Britain, founders of the wider, self-governing England oversea.

What has been said by J. R. Green of Captain James Cook may well be said of Captain George Vancouver, the officer who, more than any other of all those trained under Cook, inherited that great seaman's spirit, methods, and outlook : "His work was more than a work of mere discovery. Wherever he touched, in New Zealand, in Australia" [and I may truly say the same of Vancouver's explorations and surveys in the Pacific Islands, in those especially of the Hawaiian group, and along the great length of the north-west American coast, with its vast network of inlets, sounds, and archipelagos] "he claimed the soil for the English crown." Englishmen became seized with "the sense of possession, with the notion that this strange world of wonders was their own, and that a new earth was open in the Pacific for the expansion of the English race."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, with that strange neglect which recent English historians (apparently under the influence of American publications) have dealt out to this great British seaman, Mr. Green never mentions Vancouver's name.

That young Vancouver entered the Navy at the age of thirteen in Captain Cook's second great voyage ; that he sailed and observed and surveyed also in Cook's third and last great voyage, penetrating with him along the far north-western coasts of America and the Behring Straits ; that he afterwards served and fought under the immediate inspiration of Rodney, Hood, and Gardner,—all this was a noble training for the hazardous and varied difficulties of his own long "Voyage of

<sup>1</sup> *History of the English People*, vol. iv. p. 197.

Discovery." And it is characteristic of the man that he has stamped the names of his leaders and comrades, or of his nation's great seamen and statesmen, on many a coast and cape, on many a strait and sound and sea-way, and also on various splendid mountain ranges and peaks of the regions he laid open to man's knowledge, and placed under the British flag. Fate, juster in this case than the historians, has identified his name imperishably with the great island he circumnavigated and its great waterway, now one of the most important islands and sea-gates of the British Empire.<sup>1</sup> Western Canada's Pacific seaport, and the town which has risen on Columbia River at the point where Lieutenant Broughton closed his inland ascent, and the bold headland to the east of King George's Sound in West Australia, also perpetuate Vancouver's name.

Though he died untimely, at the early age of forty years, the results of the one long Expedition (1791-1795) of which Vancouver was Chief Commander are marvellous. He discovered and annexed to the British Crown a hitherto unknown region of the southern coast of "New Holland" (now Australia), with a noble sound and inland harbour which must ultimately prove one of the finest anchorages and seaports of the British nationhoods. Had the strict orders which bound him, and the pressure of time, permitted, he would, inevitably, have solved the problem of the sea-way between the Australian mainland and the island of Tasmania. He inaugurated the true method of that solution, viz. to pass from west to eastward, not from east to west,—a method suggested by the Dutch navigators long before, and, after Vancouver's discovery, followed with fine result by King and Flinders in succession. Passing thence, partly on Cook's track, and seeking for safe harbourage on the western coast of

<sup>1</sup> To gratify the Spanish administrator, Vancouver himself called it "Quadra and Vancouver." The first part of the title has dropped away.

New Zealand, he completed the exploration of Dusky Bay, which Cook had left partially accomplished. He won to peace and unification the hostile races of the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands, the discovery of which Cook had deemed his own greatest exploit in the Pacific. Vancouver, with the consent of the "Princes" and Chiefs, annexed to the British Crown Owhyhee (the most important of those islands), on which his former leader, Cook, had been murdered. Vancouver was also the first British navigator to enter the "fabled Strait of De Fuca," and to explore and survey the wide-reaching and intricate waters to which it forms the Pacific sea-gate, thus ending the persistent legend of a water-way from the Pacific to the Atlantic through an inland "Mediterranean Sea." He was the first navigator who can with certainty be shown to have circum-navigated the great island which now bears his own name, "Vancouver." By the authority and in the name of "His Britannic Majesty" King George III., and under the unfurled British flag, he took possession of the fertile lands southward and eastward of its great Sound (called by him "Puget Sound," after his lieutenant, Puget), lands which now form a large portion of the American State of Washington. The names of his trusty officers, or of famous British admirals and statesmen, still stand, just as he affixed them, designating the notable headlands, inlets, bays, and splendid mountains of those wide regions. He was, furthermore,—a fact American historical writers are foolishly reluctant to admit—the first navigator under whose instructions white-faced officers and seamen (all of them British) entered and ascended the great Columbia River (for one hundred miles from its bar), taking possession of its waters and territories under the flag and in the name of the British king. From the Strait of Juan de Fuca northwards to the verge of the Arctic Circle, in the successive stages of his persistent search, the long chain of islands and archipelagos which fringe

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the north-west of America, and which Cook on his final voyage had rapidly noted, Vancouver surveyed on all sides with minute scientific care and with noble untiring energy. With the same unfailing accuracy he surveyed also the entire West American coast, from the Strait of Juan de Fuca southward to Monterrey, and thence, southward still, to the parallel of  $29^{\circ} 54''$  north latitude.

Cook and Vancouver, in short, have done more than any other navigator to associate and link together, by their discoveries and surveys, the two greatest over-sea Dominions of the British people, Australia and Canada, and along with them the picturesque and fertile smaller Dominion of New Zealand. What Cook, in connection with, and subsequent to, the epoch-making exploit of Wolfe, did for the eastern shores of the British Canada (that was to be), Vancouver did for its western and Pacific coasts and sea-way. And if much of what he discovered, and with prophetic strategy placed within the keeping of England, has been timorously or blindly renounced, still much abides. The great Republic of North America has also a right to remember with gratitude this man and his achievements. His wonderful survey of its Pacific coast endures. The splendid mountain chains and river and sounds and shores and islands he tracked at life-cost have passed largely into her grasp. His work, done for Britain and for science, was done for man ; and America has reaped the rich harvest of his toil and sacrifice.

George Vancouver, of mingled Dutch and English blood, was born in 1758. He entered the Navy, as I have said, at the age of thirteen, serving in Cook's second great voyage of discovery, and again as midshipman, and finally lieutenant, in Cook's third and last expedition. Thus from early years he became acquainted with the Pacific Ocean from the Antarctic to

the Arctic Circles, and was unwittingly being trained for his great achievement.

In December 1781 he sailed in Rodney's Expedition to the West Indies as Lieutenant in the *Fame*, one of the ships that took part in the epoch-making sea-fight of April 12, 1782. The glory of that great victory Captain Hood and Captain Sir Alan Gardner shared. In 1784 Vancouver was appointed to the *Europa*, which in 1786 went as flag-ship to the Jamaica station "under the broad pennant of Commodore Sir Alan Gardner" (afterwards Admiral Lord Gardner) as Commander-in-Chief. Gardner's quick eye soon took note of the young officer who had been trained under Cook, and had been tested on so many seas.

In 1789, on Gardner's advice to Lord Chatham and the Board of Admiralty, Vancouver was appointed as second in command to Captain Roberts for the proposed expedition (known as "the South-Sea Exploring Expedition") "to navigate the coast of North-West America as well as to explore some of the southern regions of the Pacific." This Expedition was set aside for the vastly greater movement known to history as "The Spanish Armament" under Lord Howe, appointed owing to the alarming news regarding Spanish designs and aggression on the coasts of North-West America. The vigour and swiftness with which that great fleet under Lord Howe was organised (action forming a remarkable contrast to the later policy of British Governments in their negotiations with the U.S.A. regarding the "Oregon territory") altered at once Spain's attitude; the great armament of Lord Howe had no need to sail.

Instead of that armament for war, the small and peaceful expedition under Vancouver (who meanwhile, as he says, "had resumed my profession under my highly esteemed friend, Sir Alan Gardner, then Captain of the *Courageux*") was commissioned. Vancouver was raised to the rank of Commander in the Navy. It is best to state the position in his own words.

"The uncommon celerity which had attended the equipment of one of the noblest fleets Great Britain ever saw (Lord Howe's 'Spanish Armament'), had brought its due influence upon the Court of Madrid; . . . restitution was offered to this country for the capture and aggressions made by the subjects of His Catholic Majesty, together with an acknowledgment of an equal right with Spain to the exercise and prosecution of all commercial undertakings in those seas reputed before to belong only to the Spanish Crown." Amongst these "commercial undertakings" Vancouver refers to the "extensive fisheries," the "fur trade with China," etc. "It was," he continues, "further deemed expedient that an officer should be returned to Nootka (the 'Sound' and trading-station on the west coast of what is now 'Vancouver Island') to receive back any form of restitution to the territory on which the Spaniards had seized, and also to make an accurate survey of the coast, from the 30° of North latitude, north-westward towards 'Cook's River'; and further to obtain every possible information that could be collected respecting the natural and political state of that country."<sup>1</sup>

There was, however, another aim set before Vancouver in his Commission from the Admiralty—an aim which had also been urged upon Cook in relation to his great (third) voyage into those North Pacific seas, viz. to ascertain the existence, or otherwise, of "a north-eastern communication between the waters of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans," through an inland "Mediterranean Sea." Vancouver, with his sturdy common sense and scientific knowledge, pours sarcasm on this theory, "the enthusiasm of modern closet philosophy," which persisted despite Cook's refutation of it.

This "favourite opinion," he says, "was again roused from its state of slumber . . . with renovated vigour.

<sup>1</sup> Vancouver's *Voyage of Discovery*, vol. i., Introduction.

Once more ‘the Archipelago of St. Lazarus’ was called forth into being . . . upon the authority of one Spanish Admiral named De Fonte, Da Fonta, or De Fuentes and a Mr. Nicholas Shapely from Boston in America, who was stated to have penetrated through this ‘Archipelago,’ by sailing through the ‘Mediterranean Sea,’ on the coast of North-West America, within a few leagues of the oceanic shores of that ‘Archipelago,’ where he is said to have met the Admiral! The Straits said to have been navigated by one Juan de Fuca were also brought forward in support of this opinion,” etc. The “closet philosophy, eager to revenge itself for the refutation of its . . . speculations,” went the length of “ranking Captain Cook amongst the pursuers of Peltry,” “and dared even to drag him forward in support of its . . . conjectures.” This “Mediterranean Sea” theory became a subject of much merriment to Vancouver’s officers and crews as their survey proceeded.

Before sailing from England Vancouver gave minute personal attention to the medical and other stores, and all means for ensuring the health, efficiency, and comfort of his men, and for protecting them against disease. In this connection he speaks in warmest terms of eulogy of his former leader, Captain James Cook, whose methods on his second and third voyages Vancouver had closely observed. He calls him “the first great discoverer of this happy means for preserving the lives and health of the officers and seamen engaged in such distant and perilous undertakings.”

Those methods he summarises thus: “An unremitting attention not only to food, cleanliness, ventilation, etc., especially provisions and medicine . . . and relieving the men from fatigue and the inclemency of the weather, the moment the need of their duty could permit them to retire.” To these means, he affirms, “is to be ascribed,” since Cook’s day, “the preservation of the health and lives of sea-faring men on long voyages.” He further declares that “to these and

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other valuable means Great Britain is at this time, in a great measure, indebted for her present exalted station amongst the nations of the earth." He regards himself as having been "greatly honoured with His Majesty's Command to follow upon the labours of that illustrious navigator, Captain James Cook."

Vancouver was soon to prove during his own long years of arduous exploration the supreme wisdom of minute attention to those methods. He sailed early in 1791 in the sloop of war *Discovery*, "a vessel of 340 tons burthen," accompanied by the armed tender, *Chatham*, "of 135 tons burthen," under the command of Lieutenant Broughton. After touching at Guernsey and Teneriffe he reached the Cape of Good Hope on July 9th. There (in False Bay) disaster in an unexpected shape fell upon the Expedition. A mysterious malady attacked the crews. The sickness was of an extremely debilitating febrile character, accompanied with severe dysentery, "some of the patients becoming extremely ill." The cause of the malady was eventually traced to "a large Dutch ship lately arrived from Batavia, from which many men had been sent on shore to the hospital, very ill and dying with this and other infectious disorders. The surgeon of the *Discovery* was seized in a very sudden and singular manner, and reduced to an extreme state of delirium."

Here was a strange coincidence—Cook's Expedition on the first of his three great "Voyages round the World," had, at Batavia, been attacked by this same "Batavian malady," in addition to the "scurvy" which had previously visited it. Vancouver was not a member of that first Expedition, yet his precautions against disease had been so thorough that almost his entire company were saved from the fatal results of this malady which had wrought such havoc amongst Cook's officers and men.

On Cook's voyage from Batavia to the Cape of Good Hope (1771), "in a short time the ship was little

better than a hospital, and almost every night a corpse was committed to the sea. In the course of six weeks they buried in all three and twenty persons, besides the seven that had been buried in Batavia ; such was the havoc disease had made among the ship's company." (See Captain Cook's *Three Voyages round the World*, edited by Lieutenant Charles R. Low ; also Captain Cook's *First, Second, Third and Last Voyages*, edited by George William Anderson, p. 213, etc.) Of Vancouver's entire company, as we shall see, only one man died from this dreadful scourge.

From the beginning, Vancouver, while true to the direct purpose of his enterprise, yet kept before him "the distinct aim of letting no opportunity pass that could with propriety be embraced for the object of geography and navigation. . . . I resolved, on our way to the Pacific Ocean, to visit the south-west part of New Holland, and endeavour to acquire some information of that unknown though interesting country. . . . The season would probably be too far advanced for so much information as I could have wished ; yet there still remained a fair prospect of obtaining some intelligence which would render the task less difficult to those whose object might hereafter be to explore that country." He, therefore, on sailing out of False Bay, "appointed the next rendezvous (of the *Discovery* and *Chatham* in case of their separation) off what in the charts is called Lyon's Land in about the 35° of S. W. latitude."

Almost immediately, after parting from the South African shores (July 17, 1791), heavy gales broke upon them, separating the two vessels. This tempestuous weather, rising at times to "terrific storm," and occasionally the "violent flurrie" raising the spray into dense fog, clung to them almost all the way across the Southern Ocean, whilst, at the same time, the baffling "Batavian fever and dysentery" disabled a large portion of the crews. The death of Neil Coil, a marine, "an

exceedingly good man," from this malady in the night of Wednesday, September 7, and the depressing effect of that one death upon the company, is recorded with manifest deep feeling and keen regret.<sup>1</sup> On reaching the region of "what in the charts is called Lyon's Land," Cape Leeuwin showed herself quite true to her fierce character. Finally, on the morning of Friday, September 23, amidst heavy gales "the *Chatham* signal was made to 'look-out' on the larboard beam." Heavy gales still swept them, and "on Sunday the 25th, the slings of the main-yard were carried away, and we were compelled to part with all the sails on the main-mast," etc.

#### DISCOVERY OF SOUTH-WEST AUSTRALIA

In the afternoon (of Monday, September 26), "a light breeze (after a morning of rare calm) sprang up from the northwards, with which we steered to the N.E., and soon discovered land by compass from N.E. to N. 27 E. . . . At the dawn of day on the 27th we made all sail for the land. . . . The land now in sight, being the northernmost seen the preceding night, is remarkable for its high cliffs falling perpendicularly into the sea . . . (and) forms a conspicuous promontory, to which I gave the name of 'Cape Chatham' in honour of that noble Earl who presided at the Board of Admiralty on our departure from England." As the Batavian malady "still continued to affect the health of some in both vessels . . . and they remained in a very reduced condition, . . . I determined to put into the first port we should be so fortunate as to discover." On Wednesday the 28th, "it was now proved that the white cliff, previously passed, formed the most northern part of this coast, which I named 'Cape Howe' in memory of that noble Earl. . . . Many whales were playing about the ship during the morning." . . . The high mountain to the eastward, "conspicuously remark-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 126, 127.

able for its superior elevation, I distinguished after my highly esteemed friend by the name of 'Mount Gardner,' and the barren rocky cluster of islands by the name of 'Eclipse Islands'" (from the recent notable eclipse of 1791).

*Wednesday, September 28.*—Aided by a gentle breeze, they discovered a welcome opening in the coast, by "a high rocky bluff," into which "the *Chatham* was directed to lay. The weather by this time had become thick and rainy with much thunder and lightning; but, as the soundings continued regular, we steered into port, and passed the high rocky bluff-point in 30 fathoms water, drawing our course close along its shore, which is a high and nearly perpendicular cliff.<sup>1</sup> The soundings soon showed to 12 fathoms and gradually decreased afterwards until abreast of the second white sandy beach, where we anchored in 6 fathoms water, having a clear bottom of fine white sand. A continuation of the thick weather prevented our seeing about us until the morning of Thursday the 29th, which, being delightfully serene and pleasant, discovered our situation to be very snug and secure in a spacious Sound.<sup>2</sup> . . . A stream of fresh water drained through from the beach (the third beach), which—although nearly of the colour of brandy—was exceedingly well-tasted. By this stream was a clump of trees, sufficient to answer our present wants of fuel; at the bottom of this clump was found the most miserable human habitation my eyes ever beheld."

Such was Vancouver's discovery of the shores of South-Western "New Holland" and of the noble Sound and harbour to which he gave the names respectively of "King George III.'s Sound," and "Princess Charlotte Harbour." Such was his finding of "Vancouver's Well."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i. bk. i. p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

## VANCOUVER IN AUSTRALIA

I need not dwell upon Vancouver's experiences in King George's Sound and its neighbourhood ; these are set forth in the poem. Standing at the southern point of the entrance from the outer Sound into Princess Charlotte Harbour (at the bluff named by him "Point Possession"), he and his party unfurled the British flag and drank the King's health, and took possession of the entire region in the name of His Britannic Majesty.

At first he "entertained no very high opinion of the country." The truth is that the immediate "country" to which he alludes is not a normal or very attractive specimen of Australian scenery. It is a somewhat swampy deposit of what he terms "okerish peat" (the true home, however, of the exquisitely perfumed *Boronia megastigma*). The "brandy-coloured" water, with its infusion of tannin, proved the finest possible remedy for the debilitated crews. Under its influence and that of the pure clear bracing air of the south-west coast, Vancouver's company quickly rallied and regained perfect energy and hopefulness. He found other springs and streams of crystal-clear water, yet chose to draw the water-supply for his further voyage from this, "Vancouver's Well."

Another feature greatly perplexed Vancouver. None of "the wretched inhabitants," of whom, from the character of their "miserable habitation," he had formed a very poor opinion, could be found. Moreover, "on the sides of the hills," and all around, "the vegetation had undergone the action of fire ; the largest of the trees had been burnt, though slightly ; every shrub had some of the branches completely charred" ; yet "none of the huts seemed to be affected by it." By and by, Vancouver found, where a "stream of water meandered through a copse," an entire "deserted village of the natives." Besides, along a

larger water-course the “fish-wears” were *above* the water-level, a thing, as it seemed to him, difficult to comprehend!

This interest in the native populations, which marked Vancouver in every land he visited, is a very winsome feature of his character, as is also his great interest in the varied animal and vegetable life. But his surprise simply means that he was unacquainted with the habits of nomad peoples, and with the features of the diverse seasons of Australia.

How to burn away the tangled and snake-infested autumn scrub at the approach of winter is a trick the Australian “selector” and “squatter” have now learnt from those “miserable natives”; and how “fish-wears” that stand above dry-season level may be quite effective when the October and November floods come is not a difficult proposition for an Australian. As to the “miserable habitations,” the simple fact is that the intertwined huts of those West Australian tribes (of which Vancouver gives excellent pictures) were much better shaped and more intricately constructed than the simple “mia-mias” of hotter and more easterly regions.

For one thing in his account of the fauna and flora Australians should be grateful to Vancouver. He is almost the only European navigator who gives no countenance to the absurd “legend” that “Australian birds are songless and Australian flowers scentless”—a notion due to the condition of an Australian forest in the desiccating midday summer heat. As he penetrated inland he was struck with the “variety of small birds, some of which sang very melodiously.” And soon a much more favourable view of “New Holland” began to break upon him. The stream “meandered in a northerly direction between the hills, which, opening to the east and west, presented a spacious plain with forest trees occupying the banks of the rivulets, and the sides of the hills to their very summits.” That

sounds better! Had Vancouver but got a glimpse of the great Karri forest of that far west, or of the fern-tree glades of the inlands, what a glowing estimate we should have had of "New Holland"!

It is clear that the reverberating thunder of Vancouver's guns on sea and on shore had simply caused the natives to withdraw inland. But the "beads, nails, knives, looking-glasses, medals," he wisely left in some of the huts, "as tokens of kindly dispositions," doubtless had a reassuring effect after his departure. When, ten years later, in the mid-summer (December) of 1801, Flinders entered King George's Sound, he found the natives present in large numbers, and disposed very amicably. There was then no trace of fire, nor any lack of food.

The crews cast envious eyes on the "abundant wild-fowl," which, however—taught by the accurate throw of the aboriginal spear and boomerang—for the most part, says Vancouver, "escaped our vigilance." Indeed as sportsmen, he confesses, his officers and crews were "indifferent shots"; not so with their swivel and other guns at sea! But they did not return empty-handed. Near to that green island, "covered with the most beautiful herbage," they soon filled their boats with those "deliciously flavoured" oysters, which caused Vancouver to bestow upon that region of King George's Sound the unpoetic name "Oyster Harbour," a designation it still bears.

On sailing from King George's Sound Vancouver still clung to his aim of continuing to track the southern coast of "New Holland" eastward; he reached to the island named by him "Termination Island" on the edge of the "Great Bight." There he had to abandon his cherished dream. The sudden shifting of the wind to southward, the "strong rising sea, indicating bad weather, on an unexplored coast whose shoals extended a great way sea-ward, warned that more time would necessarily be required, in the

prosecution of such an enquiry, than the main object of our voyage would *at present* allow. I was therefore compelled to relinquish, with great reluctance, the favourite project of further examining the coast of this unknown though interesting country ; and, directing our route over an hitherto untraversed part of those seas, we proceeded without further delay towards the Pacific Ocean.”<sup>1</sup> Those words “*at present*” are pathetic. When, after his five years’ voyage, Vancouver returned to England with shattered strength, the completion of that eastward survey of the southern coast of “New Holland” was not for him. Other and equally daring navigators accomplished it.

#### VANCOUVER IN THE PACIFIC AGAIN

Vancouver’s voyage round the South Cape of “Van Dieman’s Land” (Tasmania) and his survey of Cook’s old mooring-ground, Dusky Bay, New Zealand, with the terrific storms that broke upon his Expedition there, are alluded to in the poem. These incidents and the discovery of “Oporo,” “the Snarer,” and “Chatham Island” (the latter by Broughton) in the South Pacific, with the reunion of the *Discovery* and the *Chatham* at Tahiti (December 30, 1791), after their separate courses of navigation, need not be dwelt upon. The first year (1791) of this great “Voyage of Discovery” was thus completed.

#### SECOND YEAR (1792)

The Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands were henceforth to form the strategic centre of Vancouver’s enterprise. He had been there when Cook was slain ; in these Islands and their inhabitants he took a keen interest.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i. bk. ii. chap. ii. p. 158.

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Their position in the Pacific seemed to him of the utmost importance for England. Amongst the very valuable "Astronomical and Nautical Observations," and discussions on the "Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants and Products" of the various regions visited by the Expedition, Vancouver's chapters on the Sandwich Islands, and on his relations with their chiefs and peoples, are not the least important and interesting.

Arriving at Owhyhee early in 1792, and visiting also Waahoo, Attowai, etc., Vancouver set himself to gain the confidence of the various chiefs and to bring to an end the disastrous "external wars and internal commotions," which, along with "the ravages of disease," had resulted in "devastation" and a "diminished population." He has also suggestive remarks on "American trade and its effects."<sup>1</sup>

The narrative now deepens in interest, and the excitement of large events. In vol. ii. (containing chapters iii.-xi. of Book the Second) we have the thrilling story of the first year of the great survey of the North-West coast of America. This covers his sighting the American mainland (in "New Albion," corresponding to what is California and part of Oregon) in  $39^{\circ} 27'$  north lat., on April 17th, 1792; his minute survey of that coast, northward (during which he surmised from the currents and character of the waters the existence of some large river, afterwards found to be the "Columbia," having its outlet into the Pacific. Falling in, somewhat later, with "an American vessel," he learned from its master (Mr. Gray) more definite details as to the bars and sandbanks blocking that river's estuary and exit. His present objective, however, was the mysterious "Straits of De Fuca"; and these he at length entered, amidst heavy rain and rising wind. So began that toilsome, minute scientific examination and survey of the great Sound, and all the "inlets," bays,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Edit. 1801, vol. i. bk. ii. chap. i. and ii. pp. 343-410.

shores, and windings of the waters which separate the noble island now known as "Vancouver Island" from the mainland of the American Continent, by which Vancouver put an end for ever to the "closet philosophy" as to a "Mediterranean Sea" through the North American Continent!

Week after week, and month after month, both directly in person and by frequent boat excursions under the command of his lieutenants, he continued the accurate examination of those coasts and waters; the names of his officers, or of eminent British leaders and seamen—from "Port Townshend" and "Puget Sound" and on to "Admiralty Inlet," round to "Sir Harry Burrard Inlet," and on north to "Johnstone Straits" at the storm-swept northern passage into the Pacific Ocean—stand for ever affixed to the prominent features of that great sea-way. His descriptions of the "natives," of the soil and scenery, the beast, bird, fish, and vegetable life, are deeply interesting. The beauty and grandeur of the landscape south of Puget Sound charmed and astonished him.

"As we had no reason to imagine that this country had ever been indebted for any of its decorations to the hand of man, I could not possibly believe that any uncultivated country had ever been discovered exhibiting so rich a picture."

The deer, the abundant bird-life, the salmon (two kinds) and sturgeon of the Columbia River, the great white swan with its startling contrast to its black congener of "New Holland," the variety of edible vegetables and fruitage, the characteristics and customs of the "Indian" natives, all these things are noted by this keen-eyed observer.

Above all, the majestic grandeur of the giant snow peaks of the "Cascade Mountain range," discovered and named and made known by him, stir him to admiration. Thus, of Mount Rainier (Tacoma), which had attracted his attention from the ocean, prior to

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his entrance through the Strait of Juan De Fuca, he writes :

"The most remarkable mountain we had seen on the Coast of New Albion now presented itself. The summit, covered with eternal snow, was divided into a very elegant double fork, and rose conspicuously from a base of lofty mountains clothed in the same manner."<sup>1</sup> Later (May 26, 1792) he says that the inlet towards Mount Rainier ("named after my friend Admiral Rainier") was found "to terminate here in an extensive circular compact bay, whose waters washed the base of Mount Rainier though its elevated summit was yet a very considerable distance from the shore. . . . The perpetual clothing of snow seemed to form a horizontal line from north to south . . . along the range of rugged mountains, from whose summits Mount Rainier rose conspicuously, . . . the whole producing a most grand picturesque effect." Vancouver gives us a drawing of this noble snow-mountain, rising above the great snow-clad mountain chain.

See also his descriptions of "Mount Baker," "Mount St. Helens," "Mount Hood," etc. Thus, of Mount Hood, discovered by Lieutenant Broughton of the *Chatham*, in his ascent and examination of the Columbia River, under Vancouver's instructions : "The same remarkable mountain that had been seen from Belle Vue Point again presented itself. . . . Mr. Broughton honoured it with Lord Hood's name; its appearance was magnificent, and it was clothed in snow from its summit as low down as the high land, by which it was intercepted, permitted it to be visible."<sup>2</sup>

At "Admiralty Inlet," Vancouver, under the unfurled British flag, formally "took possession of the Country in the name of His Britannic Majesty."<sup>3</sup> Prosecuting his survey, assisted by frequent boat excursions, he kept

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. iii. pp. 107-108.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. bk. ii. chap. vi. pp. 165 and 170.

on northward, and by and by was surprised to meet inside the strait two Spanish navy vessels (frigate and schooner), whose small tonnage and inferior equipment caused him astonishment. After a stormy passage through the northern exit, which he named "Johnstone's Strait," in honour of Lieutenant Johnstone of the *Chatham*, he became finally assured that "Quadra and Vancouver" (as he at first named it) was a great island. He expresses surprise at finding the southern side of Johnstone's Strait to be "so well inhabited, unlike the mainland shores, 'depopulated' as they were 'by conquest or disease.'" He then continued his northward survey of the "Continental shores of Broughton's Archipelago."<sup>1</sup> Entering "Fitzhugh Sound," he resolved to close, then and there, his first summer campaign northward (August 19, 1792), and this for two reasons :

1. He received the "pleasant tidings" of the arrival at Nootka of "the *Daedalus* Store Ship (from Port Jackson, Australia), laden with a supply of provisions and stores for our use," and also that "Señhor Quadra (the Spanish Administrator) was waiting with the greatest impatience to deliver up the settlement and territory at Nootka." But this was sadly dashed by the news of "a most distressing and melancholy event." Lieutenant Hergest, the Commander of the *Daedalus*, "and Mr. William Gooch, the Astronomer, with one of the seamen, had been murdered by the inhabitants of Woahoo" (Sandwich Islands). Vancouver was greatly distressed. Hergest, he says, "had been for many years my most intimate friend. The loss of Mr. Gooch was a sore blow." So Vancouver, leaving "Safety Cove," sailed southward for Nootka.

2. This also, he says, chimed with his "plan of extending the Examination of the Coast, this autumn, southward from Cape Mendocino to the Southern point of our investigation in this hemisphere." So he "de-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. chaps. viii.-ix.

terminated to abandon the northern survey of the Continental shores for the present season, though he had intended to continue it for at least a month longer."

Vancouver modestly expresses his satisfaction with the discoveries and survey of that spring and summer. "Satisfied with the results of our summer's employment, as it had—by the concurrence of the most fortunate circumstances—enabled us finally to trace and determine the western Continental shore of North America,—with all its various turnings, windings, numerous arms, inlets, creeks, bays, etc., etc., from the latitude of  $39^{\circ} 5'$ , longitude  $236^{\circ} 36'$  to Point Menzies in latitude  $52^{\circ} 18'$ , longitude  $232^{\circ} 55'$ ,—we took our leave of those solitary regions."<sup>1</sup>

#### VANCOUVER AS ADMINISTRATOR

A study of Vancouver's transactions with "Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra" (Commandant of the Marine establishment of San Blas and California), both at Nootka in relation to the cession of that settlement and afterwards at Monterrey, leads us to form a very high estimate of Vancouver's administrative skill and wisdom. (The same union of wisdom, urbanity, and firmness is visible in his negotiations with the "Princes" and Chiefs of the Hawaiian Islands.) Señor Quadra was greatly impressed by Vancouver's courtesy and fairness, and by his proposal to give Quadra's name precedence to his own in the title of the now circum-navigated island ("Quadra and Vancouver"). Vancouver, on his part, speaks in the highest terms of Quadra's kindness and magnanimity, and also of the attitude of the Spanish Franciscan "Mission" at Monterrey and at San Francisco. But this did not bind the action at Madrid !

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 229, 230.

## VANCOUVER AND THE RIVER COLUMBIA

The most interesting event of that autumn (of 1792) was the ascent and examination of the Columbia River by Vancouver's second in command, Lieutenant Broughton of the *Chatham*. Finding, after repeated attempts, that the sloop *Discovery* was of too great depth to cross the shoals, and sand-banks on the bar, a feat Gray, the American skipper, had also been unable to accomplish, Vancouver instructed Lieutenant Broughton with the *Chatham* to make the attempt and to ascend and survey the river.<sup>1</sup>

This first-hand evidence is of great importance. It furnishes us with just the facts which are of central value in reference to the "Oregon Question," the facts which various American historical writers seem determined, if possible, to remove from view, and which, unfortunately, some British historical writers have in the main allowed them to distort or suppress. Yet they are the facts upon which Mr. Pakenham, the British diplomatist, laid great stress in his negotiations with Mr. Buchanan, the American diplomatist, in relation to President Polk's extravagant demands regarding the "Oregon Territory."

The undeniable facts are : "The Columbia River was so named by Mr. Gray, master of the American ship *Columbia*." It was by no means its first name. "The discovery of this river," says Vancouver, "we were given to understand, is claimed by the Spaniards who call it 'Estrada da Ceta' after the Commander of the Vessel, who is said to be its first discoverer, but who never entered it ; he places it in 46° north latitude. It is the same opening that Mr. Gray stated to us, in the spring, he had been nine days off, the former year, but

<sup>1</sup> The account of this is given in chap. xi. of "Book the Second," *ibid.* pp. 386-418, and in chap. iii., *ibid.* vol. iii. bk. iii. pp. 85-130, where Mr. Broughton's deeply interesting account of the ascent and survey of the Columbia River is quoted in full.

could not get in, in consequence of the out-setting current ; that, in the course of the late summer, he had, however, entered the river, or rather the Sound, and had named it after the ship he then commanded. The extent Mr. Gray became acquainted with on that occasion is not farther than what I have called ‘Gray’s Bay,’ not more than 15 miles from Cape Disappointment, though according to Mr. Gray’s sketch it measures 36 miles. By his calculation, its entrance lies in latitude  $46^{\circ} 10'$ , longitude  $237^{\circ} 18'$ , differing materially in these respects from our observations. The entrance, as already stated, lies between the breakers,” etc.<sup>1</sup>

As the *Chatham* could not cross the bar, Mr. Broughton with an exploring party ascended the river in the “cutter,” and carefully examined and surveyed it “from the *Chatham* 100 miles,” and from what he deemed “the true entrance of the river 84 miles.” The party was accompanied for the latter part of the exploration by the old chief of the region. The point at which Broughton stopped, some distance south of the formidable “Cascades,” he named “Vancouver Point after Captain Vancouver,” where the town named “Vancouver” now stands. “Previously to his departure, however, he (Broughton) formally took possession of the river and the Country in its vicinity in His Britannic Majesty’s name, having every reason to believe that the subjects of no other civilised nation or state had ever entered this river before. In this opinion he was confirmed by Mr. Gray’s sketch, in which it does not appear that Mr. Gray either saw or was ever within five leagues of its entrance. The friendly old chief, who still remained of their party, assisted at this ceremony,” etc.<sup>2</sup>

The topography of the region is thus of itself

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, edit. 1798, vol. ii. bk. iii. chap. iii. p. 74 ; edit. 1801, vol. iii. bk. iii. chap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, edit. 1798, vol. ii. p. 65-67 ; edit. 1801, vol. iii. chap. iii.

enough to dispel the American contention. “The river seemed to abound with fish from the supply the natives provided, consisting of two sorts of salmon, both very good, sturgeon of a large size and very fine flavour, with silver bream, herrings, flat-fish, and soirdinias. The vegetables and berries, including cranberries, were excellent.”<sup>1</sup>

1793

Arriving again in the Sandwich Islands, Vancouver earnestly followed up to a successful conclusion the proposals he had made to the Chiefs for “a general Peace.” He instituted enquiry into the murder of Lieutenant Hergest and Mr. Gooch; and, after the most careful trial, had the three leading murderers executed. He introduced “black cattle and sheep” (“four cows, four ewes, two bulls, two rams”) which he had obtained for this purpose from Señhor Quadra. He also restored to their relatives two native females, who had been decoyed from those islands to Nootka. From the Sandwich Islands he returned to Nootka.<sup>2</sup>

#### SECOND NORTHERN SURVEY (1793)

Sailing from Nootka (Vancouver Island) in May 1793, Vancouver resumed his great survey of the N.-W. American Coast, northward from where his survey of 1792 had ceased. Joining in Fitzhugh Sound the *Chatham* (now under the command of Lieutenant Puget, for Mr. Broughton had been sent with dispatches to England), he passed through Milbank’s Sound, and “along the Continental shores.” “Extensive boat excursions” under Mr. Whidbey and other officers were dispatched in all directions. So, on northward, between “Banks’ Island” and “Pitt’s Archipelago” (east of Queen Charlotte Island), and into “Chatham

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, edit. 1801, vol. iii. pp. 127-128.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. iii. bk. iii. chaps. v.-viii.

## CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER 167

Sound," the accurate toilsome exploration proceeded. Many visits of natives were paid to them. So, north and north-westward, into "Observatory Inlet" and Port Stewart they passed. Thence, at "Port Protection," Vancouver again turned, in August, south. His second summer's northward exploration was ended.

His survey was now completed as far north as 56° north latitude. Of his interesting visits to the Spanish settlements of New California in the autumn of 1793, and his survey southward of the American coast regions "to the southern extent of our intended investigation," I need not here speak.<sup>1</sup>

### THIRD YEAR OF NORTHERN SURVEY (1794)

In vol. v. (bk. v.) Vancouver narrates his last visit to his beloved "Sandwich Islands," and "the Conclusion of the Survey of the Coast of North-West America."

In the early part of 1794 he completed his movement for the unification of the warring governments in the Hawaiian (Sandwich) Islands. He accepted "the cession of the Island of Owhyhee to Great Britain." "The cession," says the writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "seems never to have been ratified," and we know not why. Here, during Vancouver's one voyage the valour and foresight of the British Fleet had put two priceless boons into the hands of Britain —the annexation of the regions of Puget Sound and of the Columbia River, and the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands; yet the supineness of British Governments, blinded whether by the jealousies of the "Eastern Question" and the European "Balance of Power" theory, or by the pressure of internal politics, and incapable of measuring the expanding life of the Britain oversea, I need not discuss, allowed these boons to slip from their nerveless grasp. The strategic

<sup>1</sup> See for this second year of the American Survey, *ibid.* vol. iv.

and imperial value of those regions would be to-day incalculable.

The clear-eyed criticism of the most eminent American naval expert, a friend of England, with its wholesome frankness, is at this point impressive, and ought to be useful :

*"In the years of nominal peace (1748-1755) the navy of Great Britain was permitted, by a politically cautious Government, to decline much in power; but there was compensation in the fact that that of France dropped equally. In both countries there was then, as there has been ever since, a party opposed to oversea enterprise. 'The partisans of the Ministry (wrote Horace Walpole in 1755) d—n the Plantations (Colonies) and ask if we are to involve ourselves in a war for them.' . . . Both countries passed under the influence of the same ideas a hundred years later. In the middle of the Nineteenth Century the preponderant expression in England was that the Colonies were an unprofitable encumbrance, and—if occasion arose—should be encouraged to separate rather than urged to remain."<sup>1</sup>* Quite illustrative of that is the emphatic assertion of Disraeli (Beaconsfield) : "These wretched Colonies will all be independent, too, in a few years, and are a millstone round our necks."<sup>2</sup>

From the Sandwich Islands, after a very accurate survey of their coasts, Vancouver made direct for "Cook's River," passing the "Trinity Isles." This summer he reversed his process and worked from north southward. He entered and proceeded up this vast

<sup>1</sup> A. T. Mahan in *Types of Naval Officers*, p. 101. The *italics* are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Lord Malmesbury, "*Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*" (pp. 343, 344). It is significant that this letter, in which the arch-plotter confesses his betrayal of his party and of Protection ("we ought now to be for as complete Free Trade as we can obtain") is dated "Hughenden, August 13, 1852, just on the verge of the Crimean war. His hatred of the young Christian nationalities in the Mohammedan East afterwards filled the lands of South-Eastern Europe and Western Asia with boundless suffering, outrage, and ruin.

## CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER 169

arm of the sea, finally proving it to be not a "river," but giving to it the new title "Cook's Inlet." Here the *Discovery* was in imminent peril of destruction from the masses of broken ice borne with immense swiftness seawards by the outrush of the strong tide, and crashing against the bows and sides of the gallant little sloop.

In these northern latitudes he, like Cook, was visited by various parties of Russian traders, and took note of their friendly attitude and their superior knowledge of those regions and their "trade." Joined again by the *Chatham*, he moved southward, swept by gales, but surveying carefully "Port Chalmers" and the entire wide area of "Prince William Sound." Separating and again rejoining from time to time, Vancouver in the *Discovery* and Puget in the *Chatham* moved southward, examining the "exterior and interior coasts" of that wide region between "Prince William Sound" and "Cross Sound," and thence along the coasts of "King George III.'s Archipelago." So the expedition, after its four years of toil and danger, reached "Port Conclusion." It was fitly named, and it was nobly done ! Vancouver's northern quest was ended.

Vol. vi. (bk. vi. chaps. i.-vi.) tells of Vancouver's passage southward to Nootka, thence southward along the western coast of America ; thence, after examining the Galipagos Islands, he rounded Cape Horn, landed at St. Helena, and reached the Shannon, Ireland, on September 13, and finally arrived in the Thames on October 20, 1795. The voyage had extended over almost five years.

In July 1794 (see vol. v. chap. vii. p. 355) Vancouver had written in his Journal : "Received latest accounts from Europe ; not only the melancholy intelligence of the death of Louis XVI. and of the anarchy which existed in France, but also, likewise, her declaration of war against England."

It was now the new and drearer day for a more dangerous adversary than Spain, to test the prowess of the British Fleet and Army. It was the day for a younger William Pitt, and for a cool-headed, clear-eyed Wellington, and for the navy of Britain at its strongest and noblest of valour and of skill, inspired by the "greatest sailor since our world began."

Captain Vancouver had returned to England, his vital force exhausted by the long-continued strain of his great voyage. His last days were spent in preparing his Journals for the press. He died at Petersham, Surrey, before the work was quite complete. [Under the care of his brother, John Vancouver, and Captain Puget, the narrative, "*Voyage of the Discovery*," was published in 1798 (3 vols. 4to, with an additional "folio volume of magnificent maps and plates.")

The work was republished with some additions (1801, 6 vols. 8vo, with a seventh volume containing the charts of the coast of South-west Australia and King George's Sound, "The Snares" Islands, etc., and the large chart of the survey of the north-west coast of America, and the chart of the Sandwich Islands). It is from this edition, as the more accessible, I have for the most part paged my quotations.]<sup>1</sup>

(It was by "accident"—or, as Robert Browning has it,

"a Hand  
Always above my shoulder pushed me,"

that I stumbled years ago upon "Vancouver's Well." The story, then very broken, opened for me a new world of interest and of study. From the meagre details as to Vancouver's life to be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, etc., I was led on to the discovery (in that wonderful repository of literature, the Melbourne Public Library) of Vancouver's own narrative,

<sup>1</sup> I was, however, surprised to find no copy of this (1801) edition in the British Museum (Oct. 1916), while at least five copies of the 1798 edition were in that great collection of the world's literature.

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“*The Voyage of the Discovery.*” The study of this, in both its editions, brought to me a constantly growing sense of pleasure, and an always deepening estimate of Vancouver’s fine qualities and of his noble life-work done for man, and for the expansion and unity of the British people. Hence this book.)

“Vancouver’s work on the west and north-west coast of America was of the highest character, and has formed the basis of all subsequent surveys. His zeal led him to take an active share in all operations, and the hardships he thus suffered tended, no doubt, to shorten his life. He was a man of great tact, humanity, generosity, and uprightness of character.” In this estimate (*Encyc. Brit.*, art. “Vancouver”) any unbiassed student of his narrative and of his work will heartily concur. I deem it, therefore, unnecessary to deal with the insinuations of Sir Joseph Banks as to Captain Vancouver’s treatment of Thomas Pitt, the second Baron Camelford, when under Vancouver’s command. Internal and external evidence goes wholly to discount Banks’ representation, which can be accounted for only on the ground of the strange vagaries of personal dislike or of social influence. Captain Vancouver’s action under the outrageous attacks of this ungovernable, lawless man, Camelford, was quiet, dignified, manly, and decisive, though he was at the time in very delicate health.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Prof. J. K. Laughton’s article on George Vancouver in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. lviii.; also his article “Thomas Pitt, second Baron Camelford,” *ibid.*, reissue, vol. xv.

THE END



# FROM FAR LANDS

POEMS OF NORTH AND SOUTH

By J. LAURENCE RENTOUL

(GERVAIS GAGE)

*Crown 8vo.* 1914

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

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## PRESS AND OTHER NOTICES.

(Owing to the use of the pen-name "Gervais Gage," many critics were unaware of the identity of the author.)

(The late) **EDWARD DOWDEN, LL.D., Litt.D., D.C.L., etc.**, Professor of English Literature, University of Dublin; Author of *Shakespere: His Mind and Art*, etc., having seen in 1906 two of the poems prior to their publication, was good enough to write to "Gervais Gage," then personally unknown to him: "Your poems have brought enlargement, sun, air, sea, space. . . . They are admirably strong and very much alive. They promise well, as I think, for 'Gervais Gage.' . . . I should like to write at length, but I can only send you good, true, hearty thanks for both '*Achonry*' and '*Dunluce*'. I am struck by their vitality and vigour— vigour of imagination embodying itself in vigour of versification."

Having afterwards in 1908 seen the MS. of "*Sam Perry*," "*A Memory*," and "*By an Austral River*," Dr. Dowden wrote: "I have had genuine satisfaction in reading the poems. They have the vigour and manly style of those I previously read, and also a manly tenderness. '*A Memory*' is full-fraught, in its brevity, with passion. The '*Austral River*' is strong and spacious, and hope and cheer balance the tenderness of the memories in it. '*Sam Perry*' makes me know the man, and in a vivid way; such men have a claim on memory."

PRESS AND OTHER NOTICES—*Continued.*

**Dr. JAMES HASTINGS**, Editor of *The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, etc., etc., in the *Expository Times* (Edinburgh) : “‘Gervais Gage’ is the pen-name of Mr. J. L. Rentoul, an Ulsterman, long since gone to Australia. He was taught to appreciate poetry by Craik and Dowden. He was taught to write it by God. . . . He loves heroes, and writes best when he has one before him.”

**Professor W. P. PATERSON, M.A., D.D.**, Edinburgh University : “The poems have all the qualities which, I have been taught, are the merits of real poetry, viz. vision, passion, and impressive criticism of human life.”

**The “Daily Chronicle,” (London)** : “Gervais Gage is clever ; his work is emotional, anecdotal, lilting, bracing, scornful. . . . Perhaps his most notable poems are ‘Sam Perry’ and ‘Australia’s Hero.’ They have thrilling qualities as stories, and show unusual ease in versification. ‘Gervais Gage’ has the courage of his local colour. He exalts Mount Cook and is full of pride in Australia. It is good that England should give to her poetry the words peculiar to her far lands. I am glad to see the *tui* flying and the *korari* blooming in ‘Gervais Gage’s’ work.”

**The “Christian World” (London)** : “Mr. J. Laurence Rentoul, an Ulster Irishman in Australia, has the precious gift of song, and he can sing in various keys. He is at the same time a scholar—at home in Greek and Latin—and a child of nature. It is surprising how little that is weak and banal is found in his 190 pages of verse, covering apparently more than twenty years of creative activity. Ireland, England, and Germany have inspired him, but he is proudest to be able to give us the colour and atmosphere and rhythm of Australia and its nationhood. . . . Such poetry, with its ring of sincerity, its natural music, and its unerring taste is very refreshing.”

**“Literary Digest” (New York, June 27, 1914)** : “More than most British colonies, Australia has a literature of its own. Professor J. Laurence Rentoul, who uses the strange pseudonym ‘Gervais Gage,’ was born in the north of Ireland, but his verse reflects the youth and vigour of Australia, the land of his adoption. From his book, *From Far Lands* (The Macmillan Company), we take this dignified expression of lofty thought. Professor Rentoul knows how to ‘swing the grand manner.’” [The poem “Australia” is quoted in full.]

**The “Daily News and Leader” (London)** : “The *purerga* of one of the boldest and most brilliant of Australian publicists. His passionate love of nature inspires his poems no less than his passion for liberty. The vigour and sincerity of his expression of

## PRESS AND OTHER NOTICES—*Continued.*

his moods called forth the praise of one who differed from him in politics, like Professor Dowden. '*By an Austral River*' is at once a memory and a prophecy. . . . The passionate voice of his patriotic and democratic poems is sure to awaken echoes in the breasts of his (Australian) countrymen. People in this country (Britain) will find in the poems some of the noblest ideals of Australian democracy."

**The "Irish Times" (Dublin):** "Mr. J. Laurence Rentoul ('Gervais Gage') is a literary artist of high order. . . . His best work arises out of a sincerity and consistency of feeling that lend themselves well to his choice of words and measures, and perhaps reach their highest level in the character study, '*Sam Perry*', and '*By an Austral River*', the latter having most vivid pictures of natural beauty, particularly of mountain and river scenes. '*In an Austral Gully*' is perfect of its kind, such as one could imagine coming from the pen of an Australian Calverley, steeped in Theocritus and Vergil, but tied by no conventions of matter, style, or form."

**The "Freeman's Journal" (Dublin):** "Some of the poems, notably '*Achonry*', '*Dunluce*', '*Sam Perry*', '*By an Austral River*', and '*A Memory*', were admired and greatly praised by no less an authority than the late Professor Dowden. The earliest sections of the poems cling to scenes in Erin, while the later sections weave themselves around Austral or general themes. In all, the powers of versification are unusually great. There are verses of haunting sweetness, abounding in delightful fancies, and marked by a tenderness, a simplicity, and a harmony that render them singularly attractive. Not less but more successful is the singer when the deeper sense of passion urges him, as in '*By an Austral River*.'"

**"Literary Digest" (New York, Oct. 1914):** "It seems a needless affectation to spell memory 'memorie.' But this is the only blemish in 'Gervais Gage's' exquisite song—'*At a Gate on the Hill*.' We take it from his book, *From Far Lands* (The Macmillan Company)." [The poem is quoted in full. Professor Clark, of the Chicago University, was good enough to reply, defending the spelling "memorie" as in artistic keeping with the structure of the poem.]

**The "New York Times" (New York):** "Mr. Rentoul's best poems celebrate the natural beauties of Australia, where

'The lone bush breaks : and the forest dips and clings,  
Cleft deep to its heart by the sickle of glinting stream'—

and such deeds as that of Arthur Wilkinson who lost his life trying to save others at the wreck of the *Fiji* in 1891. The spiritual and physical courage which makes heroes is dear to Mr. Rentoul,

PRESS AND OTHER NOTICES—*Continued.*

and the poems, especially the narrative poems in which he sings of it, amply justify Professor Dowden's eulogium."

"The Irish Book-Lover" (London and Dublin, March 1915): "This handsome volume of verse by an antipodean member of the intellectual Ulster family of the Rentouls', now a Professor in Melbourne, comes to us heralded by warm words of appreciation from no less a critic than the late Professor Dowden. It includes poems dealing with and describing scenes and incidents in Ireland, still the home of his heart, and in the land of his adoption, of which he writes with pride—with the long thoughts of youth and the reveries of age. . . . A joyous, uplifting, spirit-stirring book, a better companion for any time or season none could desire."

The "Montrose Standard" (Scotland): "Professor Rentoul, in his Preface, says—' Vision and yearning should be sung purely and worthily, with the human pulse-beat old as man's knowing, and sin and sorrow, and new as man's love and remorse and deathless hope.' On reading the book we agree that the author has sung purely and worthily. He has a very high conception of the poet's art, and he has, besides, the conscience of the artist, which will not accept the casual word or expression, but will take nothing but the best. The peculiar virtue of *From Far Lands* (as Professor Dowden's very interesting eulogy expresses it) is its strength and its abundant vitality. Professor Dowden further remarks on the 'manly tenderness' and the 'passion' of some of the poems. '*Tender and True*' is the song entitled the '*Crowning of the King*'; . . . piteous with lament for the cruelty of war is '*Friedrich's Vow*'. . . . In '*Dunluce*' there is a vigorous picture of the great Spanish galleon crashing to its ruin on the pitiless fangs of the Irish coast; in this we have the victor's generous appreciation of the vanquished foe, concurrent with a lofty and inspiring patriotism. . . . '*Australia's Hero*' . . . is a tale of great daring: terribly real is the description of the horror, and the struggle, and the survivors' escape, while, in cowards' fashion, they leave Arthur to his fate. . . . *From Far Lands* deserves a hearty reception. Its contents are instinct with noble life, and '*Gervais Gage*' has certainly justified himself in these poems. Its message is a cheering one, and its call is musical and clear."

Professor WALTER MURDOCH, M.A. (Professor of English Literature, University of West Australia, Perth, W.A.; formerly Lecturer on English Literature and Language, University of Melbourne; Editor of *The Oxford Book of Australian Verse*) in the *West Australian*: "I have long known that Dr. Rentoul had the soul of a poet because of a ballad which he wrote in the dark days of the South African War; . . . but I did not know whether he was sufficiently master of the technique of poetry for a sustained flight. All doubts on the matter are set at rest by the

## PRESS AND OTHER NOTICES—*Continued.*

present volume (*From Far Lands*). The authentic fire burns unmistakably in many of these ardent and eloquent verses ; here is genuine poetry beyond all cavilling. . . . To any one who reads much contemporary verse it is extremely refreshing to come across a singer who always knows exactly what he means, and sings it with perfect lucidity.

"Dr. Rentoul ranges from tender love-lyric to stern invective ; and some readers will like him best as a narrative poet. One might wish indeed that the book contained a few more such stirring and spirited narratives as '*Australia's Hero*' — a great story greatly told, with splendid verve and gusto. . . . But the most masterly poem in the book, and the most irresistible in its appeal, is '*By an Austral River*', . . . with its wistful memories of the older land which was his boyhood's home, and its brave and hopeful glance at these new lands where his manhood has been spent. There is a touch of magic about such stanzas as these. . . . A strong and manful spirit breathes from the verses, a spirit of sunny optimism ; and the book closes on a note of serene and unconquerable faith."

**ARCHIBALD T. STRONG, M.A.**, Lecturer in English Literature, University of Melbourne (Author of *The Ballades of Theodore de Banville*, *Sonnets of the Empire*, *Peradventure*, etc.) in *The Herald* (Melbourne) : "Behind every line of Dr. Rentoul's there is a man, and behind a good many lines a most formidable fighting man. . . . That critic would be not only captious but utterly incompetent who should fail to recognise also that Dr. Rentoul at his best—and that best is frequent throughout this volume—is that being all too rare in Australia, a true poet with an individual voice of beauty and distinction." [Mr. Strong instances the Sonnet on "*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*," and that on "*Selene in the South*."] "Some of Dr. Rentoul's love-poetry is thoroughly delightful—witness '*Listen, Lady.*' Thoroughly charming in its lighter vein is '*My Wife and I.*' All Dr. Rentoul's best poetry is weighted with emotion, and thus possesses a fullness and fervour utterly different from the thin and amiable flutings of some of our younger English and Australian poets. His strong human feeling displays itself in '*A Mither's Cry.*' . . . A beautiful fancy, and something more than fancy is crystallised into the symbolic '*Achonry.*' . . . In a poem aflame with righteous indignation in a just cause, he pays tribute to his beloved '*Burns.*' . . . Perhaps some will consider '*By an Austral River*' the best poem in the volume. Never, one may be sure, has better poetry of the river-side been written in Australasia. In this poem the poet's varying moods and feelings seem to pour themselves forth to the music of the swirling trout-stream ; and he ends on a brave note of reconciliation and hope. . . . *From Far Lands* is a work of real moment to Australian

PRESS AND OTHER NOTICES—*Continued.*

literature ; and the better part of it bears all the marks of true and fine poetry."

**The "Sydney Morning Herald"** (Sydney, N.S.W.) : "The author's lyre has many strings. From commemorating some far-off Connaught legend he turns to the bitter irony of '*Robert Burns and Mister Pierpont Morgan*.' But he is at his best in his vigorous tributes to the lands he claims as his own, whether those lands be far or near. Quotation is inadequate to give any idea of the author's style, because he does not depend upon dainty conceits, but upon the massed intellectual imagery he invokes. Thus to say that '*In an Austral Gully*' is a magnificent effort of symbolism conveys nothing to one who has not read it. The remedy, gentle reader, is obvious."

**The "Argus"** (Melbourne, Victoria) : "Worthy of high praise. Some of the poems belong to Dr. Rentoul's early years before he came to Australia, while the latest are evidently of quite recent date. The distinguishing note of the whole volume, what gives it its individuality, is its vitality, its vigorous thought, and its forceful expression. There is, too, a true feeling for the beauties of nature, observable in many a fine description of scenes in northern Ireland, and in Australia, and New Zealand. Among the early poems, '*A Mither's Cry*', written in the Ulster-Scottish vernacular, is particularly happy in its grand simplicity, but the most remarkable of the old-world pieces is '*Achonry*'. . . . While fondly reminiscent of his own native land, Dr. Rentoul displays his keen appreciation of the scenery and the life in these new southern countries ; and his prophetic trust in their future destiny is greatly inspiring. All of this is concentrated in '*By an Austral River*', which also reveals the devotee of Izaak Walton's 'gentle art.' Therein Dr. Rentoul gives us glowing word pictures of New Zealand's soaring peaks and hurrying streams, while the hum of bees and the song of the lark suggest scenes beneath 'Erin's wistful skies.' Thence he passes to thoughts of what Australia means to him — ideas which find fit expression also in '*Australia*', a poem commemorating the birth of the Commonwealth."

**"Canterbury Times"** (Christchurch, N.Z.) : "The simpler poems are fine. '*O come with me!*' is reminiscent of the famous Elizabethan lyrics. '*A Mither's Cry*' is haunting. '*Australia's Hero*' is a stirring panegyric of some of the obscure, almost forgotten men who have dared and done deeds of heroism, the fighters of peace-time. . . . Professor Rentoul's book is welcome as a valuable contribution to Australasian serious verse. If the author is not Australian born, he is an adopted child who loves his new home hardly less than the land of his birth."

PRESS AND OTHER NOTICES—*Continued.*

**J. LIDDELL KELLY** (Author of *Tahiti*, *Tarawera*, and *The Curse of Tirhato, Akaroa, Heather and Fern*, etc.) in *The Auckland Star* (Auckland, N.Z.): "Of poetry written in Australasia and inspired by southern scenery, incident, and character, . . . it is doubtful if anything better has been produced than some of these poems. '*A Mither's Cry*' and '*Robert Burns*' are models of dialect verse. But Mr. Rentoul is at his best when he writes pure 'classical' English; and some of his earlier poems, so written, are equal to his later efforts. . . . But the three poems that give distinction to the book, and clearly mark the author's place in literature, are '*By the Australian Bush*', '*In an Austral Gully*', and '*By an Austral River*'. . . . '*In an Austral Gully*' is a masterpiece, a poem that is finely conceived and executed, an entrancing idyll. . . . But the charm lies in the telling of it, in verse not of the simplest, managed with rare skill. Almost equally fine is '*By an Austral River*'. If Mr. Rentoul would always write in this strain he would quickly win a high place in the estimation of all people of taste, as the purest, most exalted, and most scholarly exponent of Australasian scenery, life, and idealism."

**Dr. W. H. FITCHETT** (Author of *Deeds that won the Empire*, *Wellington's Men*, etc.), Editor of *Life*: "No one can think more highly than I do of Dr. Rentoul as a scholar, a fighter, and a man of brilliant intellectual gifts, but I did not suspect the stratum of genuine poetry underlying all other qualities. The book seems to me like the tapping of artesian waters. Poetry is a thing *sui generis*. It comes by gift of nature; it cannot be imitated. And certainly Dr. Rentoul has the true poetic gift. Why has he hidden it so long?"

**From Mrs. EDWARD DOWDEN**, Rockdale, Rathgar, Dublin (Editor of *Fragments of Old Letters*, *E. D. to E. D. W.*; *Edward Dowden's Letters*; *Poems by Edward Dowden*, 2 vols.; *A Woman's Reliquary*): "Edward Dowden's (my husband's) praise of your work in verse was thoroughly sincere and from his heart as I well remember; and your dedication of this book (*From Far Lands*) partly to him I deeply value. His feeling about your poems as 'bringing sun, air, sea, space,' as 'a breath of enlargement,' I quite share. Amongst the poems that I find give me this sensation most strongly are '*Australia's Hero*', '*Sam Perry*', '*Achonry*', '*By the Australian Bush*', '*By an Austral River*', and that pretty, playful idyll '*In an Austral Gully*', which has invested with a very 'out of the common' charm a theme not new, the rescue of a maiden from a bull, and how she rewarded the rescuer. I like also greatly the little poem '*Annie, my Child Lover*', '*Dunluce*', and others."—June 7, 1914.

# AT THE SIGN OF THE SWORD

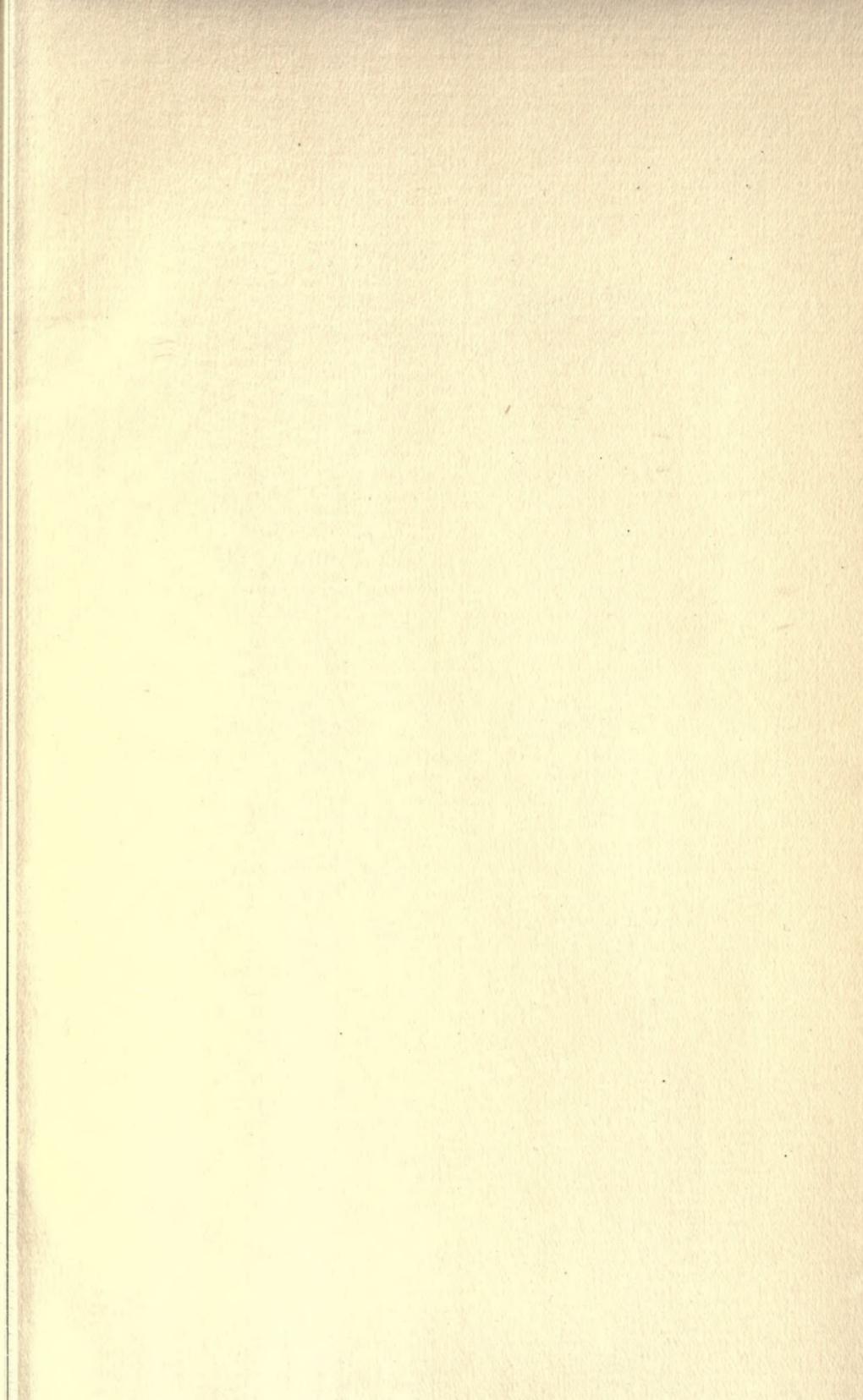
BY FOUR IN A FAMILY :

By PROFESSOR J. LAURENCE RENTOUL

(Published in Melbourne *For the Wounded Australians.*)

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The "Times" Literary Supplement, February 7, 1916 :  
"Professor Rentoul, Chaplain-General of the Australian Defence Forces (who is the author of most of these pieces), knows the ring of patriotic song. His verse has the true simplicity and spaciousness. 'Neuve Chapelle,' a poem of some length, makes a moving appeal, and the more strictly national poems have the authentic note of dignity. Such is 'Australia's Battle-Hymn,' and with it we may rank 'Australian National Song' (by Annie R. Rentoul), and 'My Own Land.' We quote four stanzas from 'Our Battle Call.' "





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